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November 2019

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CHORAL CLINIC

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WALK IN THE PARK

Amsterdam Orgelpark's Utopa Baroque Organ is a skilful fusion of old and new technologies

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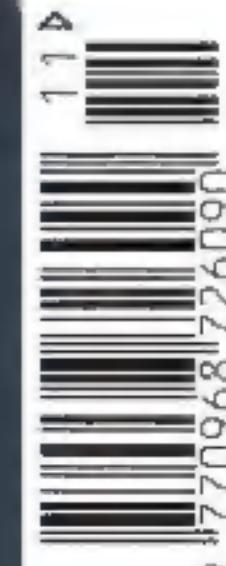
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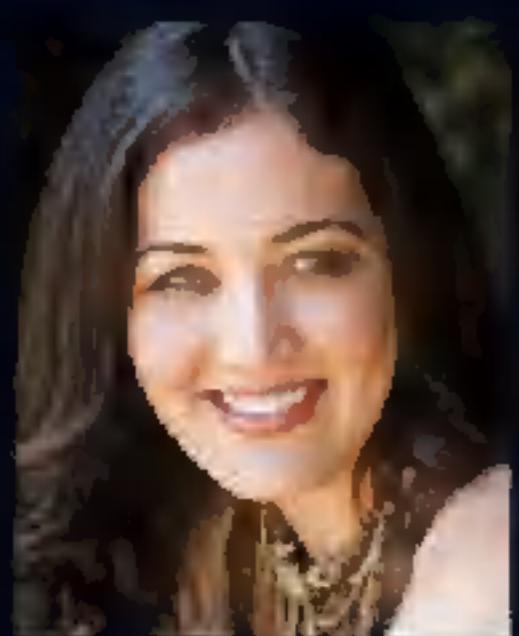
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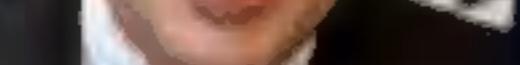
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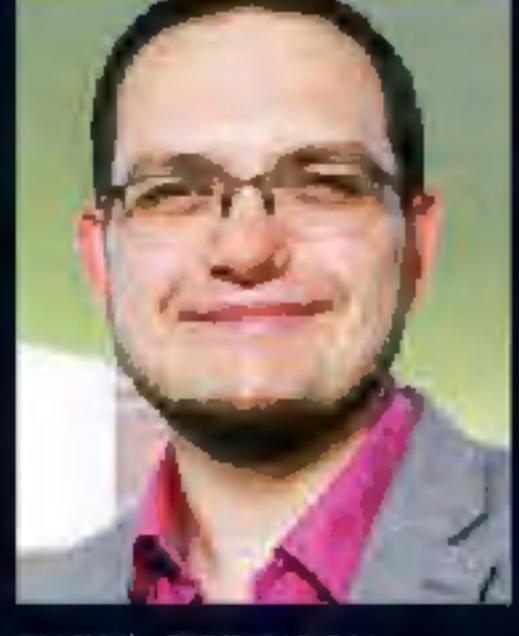
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*COMPETITION WINNERS

*Aaron Tan — AGO National Young Artist Competition in Organ Performance

**Alcee Chriss — Canadian International Organ Competition

Early birds

What delights serendipity can bring. Some years ago, limping happily along the byways of central France in my clapped-out Fiat 127 with a blown cylinder head gasket, I happened to remark to my travelling companion on the number of dead hedgehogs we'd been passing in the road. Within a minute of this remark, I saw a road sign for Hérisson, and, to my companion's consternation, turned the wheel sharply ('hérisson' being the French for hedgehog). We arrived in a small town, and immediately did a double-take as our eyes hit upon a lone man in medieval garb, followed by another, and another, till the thoroughfare was thronging. A festival of early music was under way, and we spent an entertaining few hours listening to street music and being absorbed by a luthier's demonstration in his workshop, before changing the spark plugs and pouring more oil into the car engine to enable us to sputter on for a few more kilometres.

Given the popularity of the genre today, it is easy to lose sight of the fact that in the UK a concerted interest in early music is still in its relative infancy. A conference held in 1977 on 'The Future of Early Music in Britain' gave rise to the establishing four years later of the National Early Music Association (NEMA), with the aim of promoting the appreciation and performance of medieval, renaissance and baroque music. Vocally, this upsurge has coincided with an increase in the number of chamber choirs as university chapel choir members have graduated and, rather than join a more traditional choral society, have chosen to form



professional or semi-professional a cappella groups that allow them to sing a wide range of repertoire on little rehearsal, with forces suiting both early music and contemporary music. So it is not surprising to find BBC Radio 3 giving early music a permanent regular spot and launching a New Generation Baroque Ensemble scheme (see News, p.11).

This issue brings a special focus on early music. Rebecca Tavener pays

tribute to Barbara Strozzi, born 400 years ago (see feature, p.27). A composition student of Francesco Cavalli, by the time she was 20, Strozzi had had two volumes of songs published under her own name (women usually published under a man's name); her first book of madrigals was published in 1644.

Also in this issue, Timothy Roberts unwraps the keyboard music of the great Spanish baroque composer Joan Cabanilles (see feature, p.41), examining the sources of his virtuosic style of writing and proposing a route through the complexities of performance choices that are to be made.

And last, our supplement showcases Antwerp's Laus Polyphoniae (p.52) and brings ideas of festivals at home and abroad that you might like to diarise.

Welcome to Harriet Clifford, Choir & Organ's new assistant editor. A graduate in English Literature from York University, Harriet has experience of singing in choirs as well as in journalism. We wish her a very happy time working on C&O.

Maggie Hamilton

Choir & Organ shines a global spotlight on two distinctive fields of creativity, celebrating inventiveness and excellence in all their forms.

We aim to inspire our readers through giving a platform to conductors, organists, composers, and choirs of every kind; and by showcasing the imaginative craft of pipe organ building across the centuries, critiquing new organs and tackling ethics in restoring historic instruments.

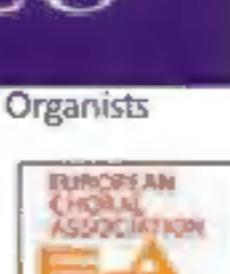
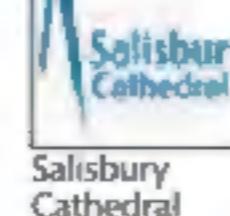
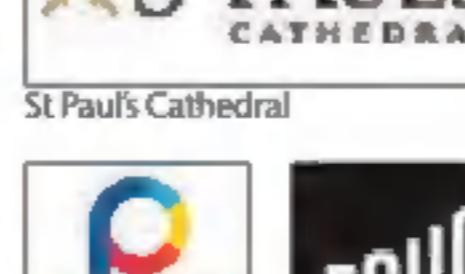
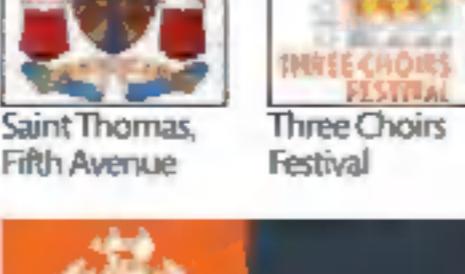
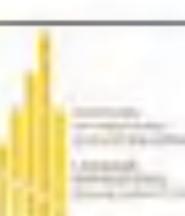
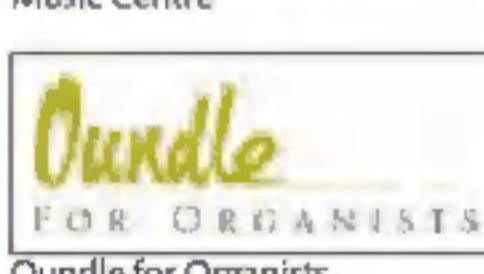
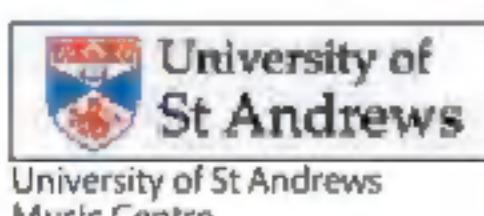
Specialist writers appraise new editions and recordings of standard repertoire and works fresh from the composer's pen, while our news and previews chart the latest developments in a changing world and present opportunities to become involved.

Choir & Organ is an invitation to engage with two unique areas of music – to explore the new, and look afresh at the familiar.

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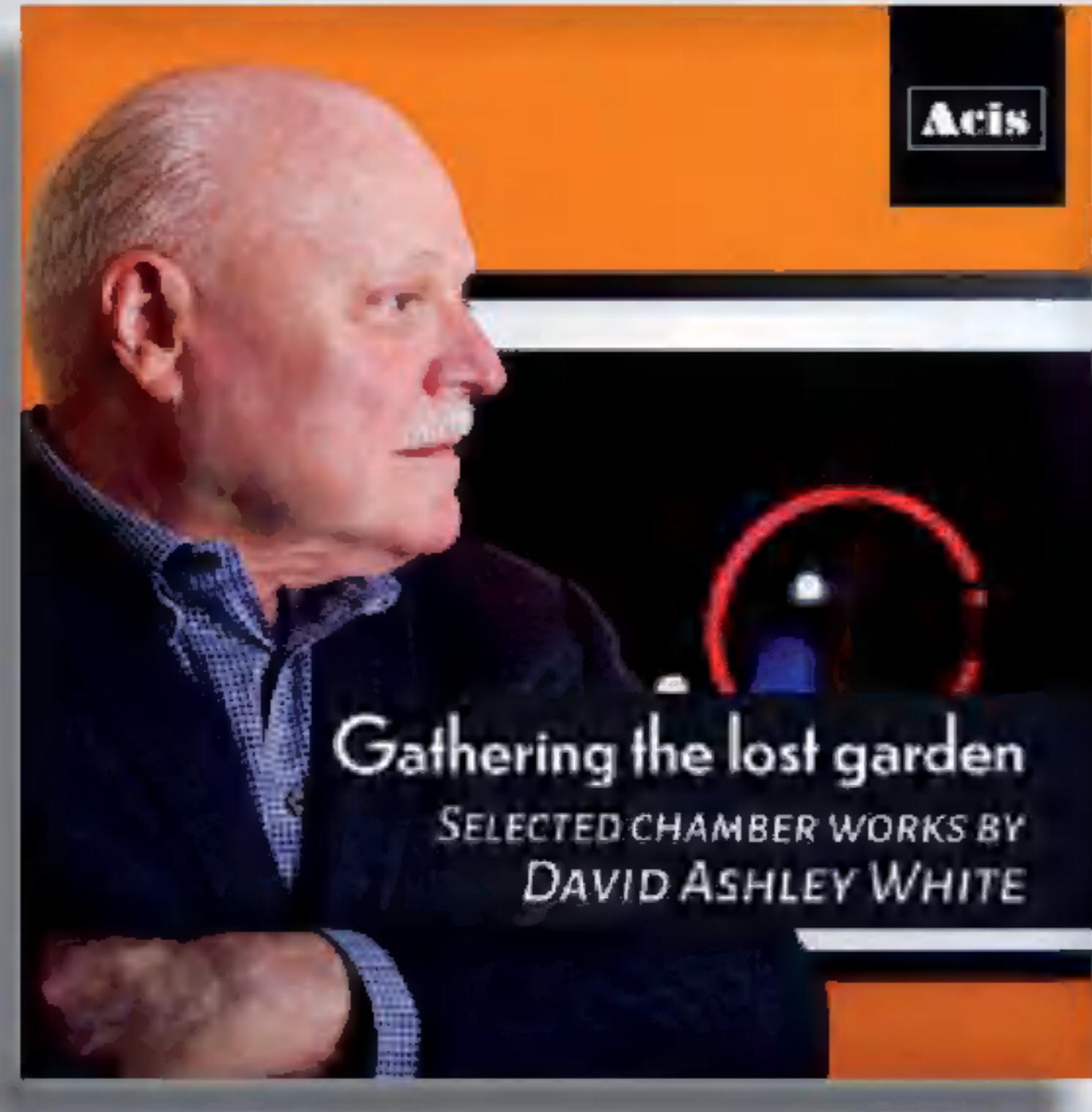
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Selected chamber works of David Ashley White, a highly regarded liturgical composer, are presented here in *Gathering the lost garden*.

Gathering the lost garden, a song-cycle for mezzo-soprano, clarinets, and piano; Elegy and Exaltation (piano trio); Lagniappe (piano); Divertimento (violin, viola); L'isola di S. Michele (oboe and piano); Six Miniatures for Three Players (piano trio); The Elm Is Scattering (oboe, piano); Arioso (cello, piano); Four Madrigals of Michelangelo (soprano, violin, piano)



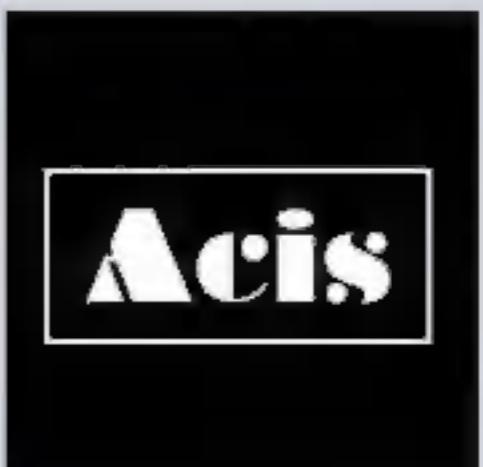
Truth & Fable engages thoroughly with its theme of violence and reconciliation in a contrasting programme that includes two world premieres (*Elder, Absalom*; *Beach, Pax Nobiscum*), performed by the award-winning vocal ensemble The Thirteen, directed by Matthew Robertson.

Elder, Ravel, Howells, Vaughan Williams, Casals, Tomkins, Beach, Paulus.



This evocative programme weaves together the disparate worlds of Aboriginal earth-ties, 'songlines' and 'Dreamtime' with the contemplative world of the medieval Office of Compline, creating a **Land of Dreams**. Trinity College, Melbourne, directed by former Tallis Scholar, Christopher Watson.

White, Bednall, Brinsmead, Edwards, Riley, Ešenvalds, Chance



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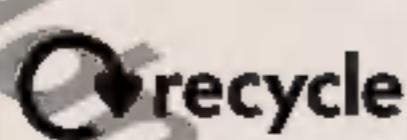
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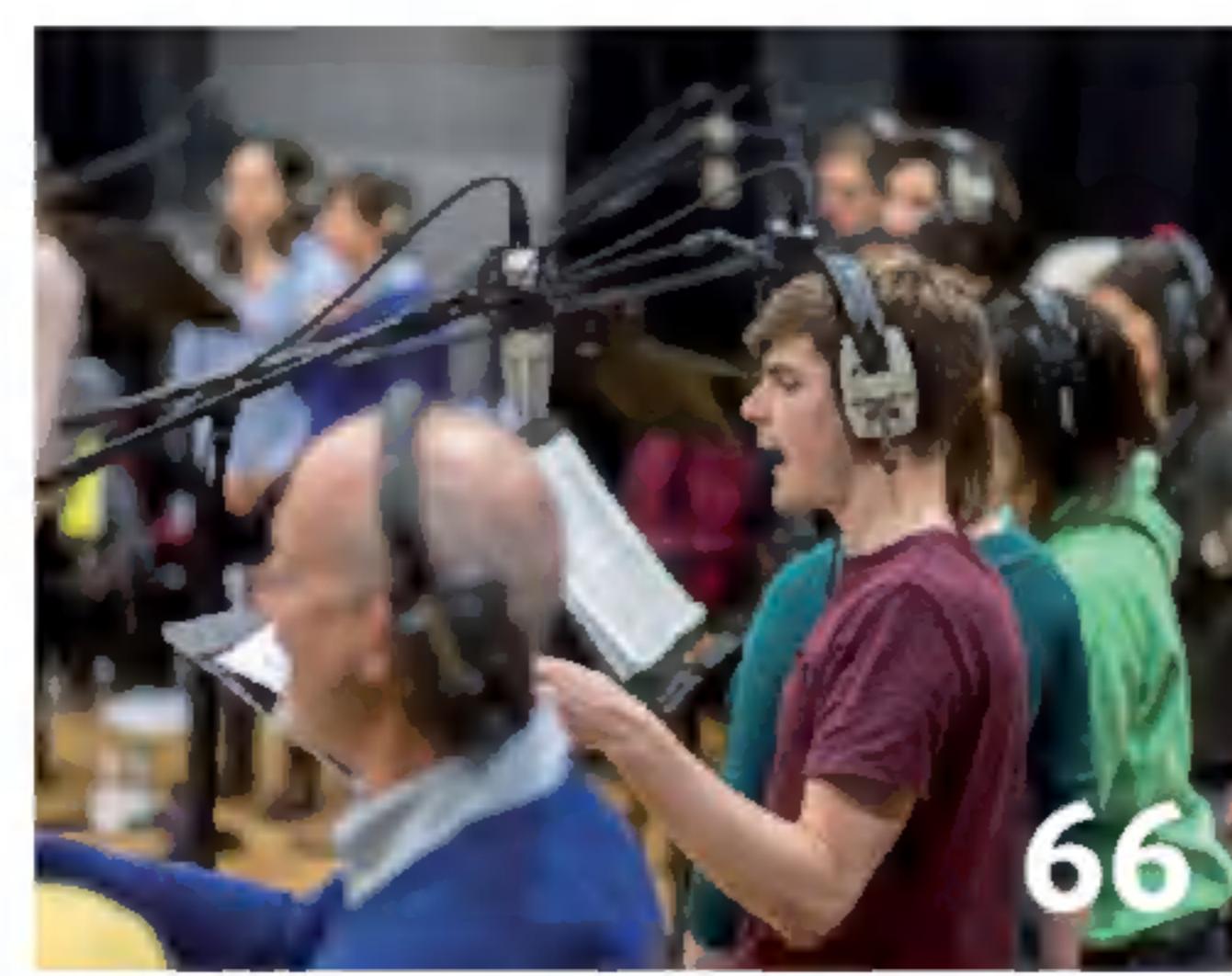
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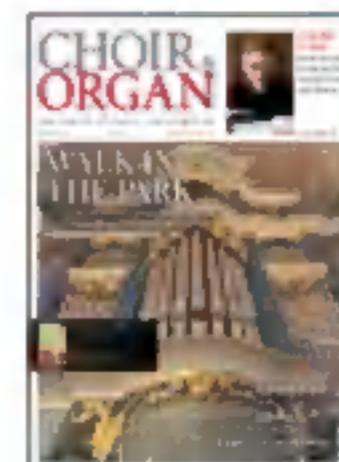
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Amsterdam Orgelpark's latest
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COVER PHOTOGRAPH © CHRIS BRAGG

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 John Pryce-Jones.

ONE PREMIERE, NINE ORGANS



▲ The Italian premiere of *La révolte des orgues*: Jean Guillou's work for nine organs comes to London in November

JEAN GUILLOU'S *LA RÉVOLTE DES ORGUES* is to receive its UK premiere at Westminster Cathedral on Wednesday 20 November, incorporating the performance of nine organs in what has been billed as a 'once-in-a-lifetime' concert.

The nine organs include seven digital instruments supplied by Viscount Classical Organs Ltd, which will be played alongside the Cathedral's two pipe organs and percussion. The piece, composed in 2007, was performed as part of the Festival des Grandes Orgues de Saint-Eustache, Paris, in the same year, and was developed as part of Guillou's vision for an organ in the new concert hall in Tenerife.

The event marks a new campaign from the Royal College of Organists (RCO) in its ongoing work to promote the organ and its music across the UK. Funds raised by the

concert will be divided between supporting music in the Cathedral, and feeding back into the RCO's new campaign, which will also initiate a National Organ Day in April 2020.

Sir Andrew Parmley, RCO chief executive, said, 'We want people of all ages and backgrounds to come and enjoy this remarkable spectacle, to look out for events in their local area throughout 2020, and hopefully be inspired to play the organ.'

Jean Guillou, born in 1930 and who died in January 2019, has frequently been featured within the pages of *Choir & Organ*, having contributed creativity, innovation and controversy to the organ world. He was titular organist at Saint-Eustache in Paris and was known globally for his radical approach.

During his career, he transcribed music by composers who openly dismissed the organ (Stravinsky) and composed vocal music

centred around it. He was also known as an improviser and an adviser to organ builders, often assisting with the development of organs which challenged traditional perceptions of the instrument.

Speaking of the unique nature of *La révolte*, Westminster Cathedral's master of music Martin Baker said, 'The complex logistics and performance skills associated with this work mean that performances are rare, so this can very much be considered a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.'

The Royal College of Organists' campaign will bring talks, workshops and performances to schools, colleges, music venues and churches, with the intention of widening the reach of the instrument across the country.

Tickets for the event at Westminster Cathedral are available from [ticketmaster.com](https://www.ticketmaster.com).

CHOIR COLLEGE UPROOTED

WESTMINSTER CHOIR COLLEGE IS TO MOVE from its Princeton, New Jersey, site to Rider University's Lawrenceville campus, it has been announced, giving rise to voiced concerns about the future of this prestigious college.

Critics of the move contend that it will not only disrupt the college's ongoing community music division – the Westminster Conservatory – which currently serves hundreds of New Jersey residents, but will also impact the level of music teaching that can take place at the institution. Over the past three years, the College has suffered a decline in enrolment, which some attribute to recent changes.

Speaking in defence of the decision, Marshall Onofrio, dean of Westminster College of the Arts of Rider University, told *Ce-O* that the 'importance and contribution' of the College have resulted in a vote to keep it open, while the move to Lawrenceville serves to counteract the historic financial deficits suffered by the University. He admitted that 'the uncertainty has played a role in the decline', but described enrolment as a complex issue which is affecting institutions across the US.

Professor of Voice Elem Eley, who has taught at the college for 33 years, commented, 'Aside from our plummeting recruitment of new students [resulting in] the smaller amount of learning and teaching that the present and the future hold, the lives of our renowned choirs are imminently threatened.'

Onofrio acknowledged that 'it is true that there are currently no facilities' to match those available at the Princeton campus, but stressed that a multi-phased process is under way, including the commissioning of an architectural firm with vast experience in producing buildings suitable for musical excellence.

The College is home to the Symphonic Choir, which is annually engaged by the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra and other orchestras around the US and Europe. Eley said, 'It is the high-profile role of the Symphonic Choir in the performance world that is our most conspicuous asset as a College. Clearly, no other school has such a heritage.'

Having merged with Rider University in 1992, the Westminster Choir College expanded over the next couple of decades to offer programmes in music education, performance, composition, music theatre and a Bachelor of Arts in Music degree. Its aim is to foster men and women in their musical careers, and prepare them to become performers and music leaders in a range of institutions.

While the Westminster Foundation together with an unaffiliated community of friends, alumni and faculty are united in their efforts to retain the Princeton campus, Onofrio said, 'I consider this a very exciting time, as it is a chance not just to survive but to thrive.' rider.edu/wcc

■ Westminster's prestigious Symphonic Choir takes a bow after performing Mahler's Symphony no.2 with the Berlin Philharmonic, conducted by Sir Simon Rattle



PETER BORG

IN BRIEF

St Albans International Organ Festival Society (IOFS) has announced the appointment of Thomas Trotter (formerly a vice-president) as IOFS president, and of Lady Verulam (already a patron) as a vice-president. organfestival.com



▲ Gramophone Awards Early Music winners Cupertinos

In the **Gramophone Awards**, held on 16 Oct, the Choral category was won by *Buxtehude: Abendmusiken* (Vox Luminis/ Lionel Meunier; Ensemble Masques/ Olivier Fortin [Alpha]); also shortlisted were *Monteverdi: Vespers* (Collegium Vocale Gent/Philippe Herreweghe [PHI]) and *A Rose Magnificat* (Gabrieli Consort/ Paul McCreesh [Signum]). The Early Music category was won by *Cardoso: Requiem* (Cupertinos/Luís Toscano [Hyperion]); also shortlisted were *Dufay: Lament for Constantinople and other songs* (Orlando Consort [Hyperion]) and *Melancholia – Madrigals and motets around 1600* (Les Cris de Paris [Harmonia Mundi]). Full details at gramophone.co.uk.

Printed Music Licensing Limited (PMLL), part of the MPA (Music Publishers Association), has launched a brand-new licence, the **Amateur Choir Licence**. Initially available on a six-month trial basis, the new licence will not only protect the rights of songwriters and publishers but will also allow amateur choirs across the UK to access sheet music more easily. All choirs wishing to participate will be asked to complete a short survey before and after the trial. Details at printmusiclicensing.co.uk.

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CHORAL CONDUCTING COMPETITION



▲ 2017 first prize winner Avis Greters conducts DR VokalEnsemplet in his prize-winning performance

THE 3RD NORTHERN CHOIR CONDUCTING COMPETITION will take place from 9-11 June 2020 in Svendborg, a historic harbour town on the island of Funen in Denmark.

The four competitive stages include sessions with both amateur and semi-professional choirs, and the final round will consist of a rehearsal and concert performance with the Danish National Vocal Ensemble – the professional chamber choir of the Danish Broadcasting Corporation. The international jury will include professional conductors and pedagogues representing choirs from the UK, Scandinavia, Germany and France.

The competition repertoire, which will be fully announced at the beginning of March 2020, ranges from late renaissance to contemporary works, and will include music by Spanish, German, Scandinavian, British and French composers plus traditional Danish songs.

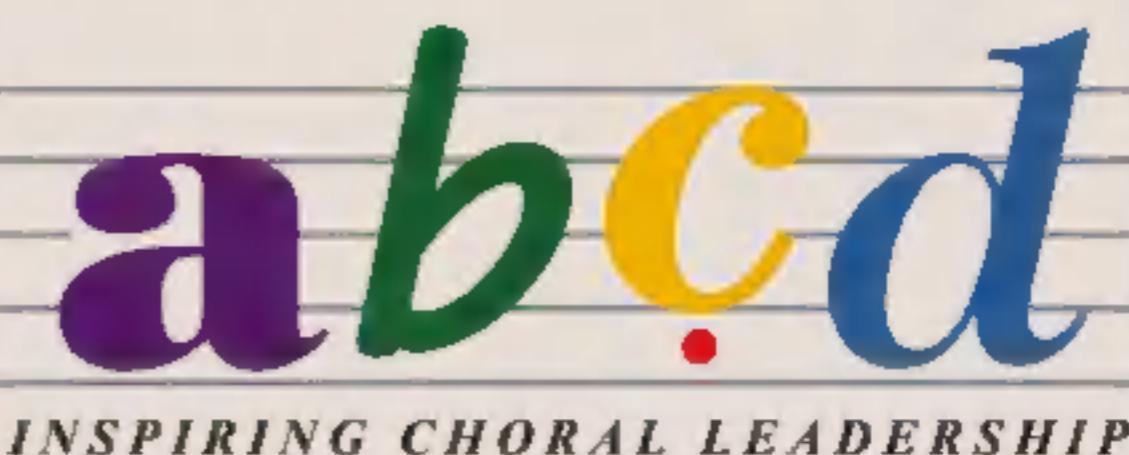
The competition is open to conductors born in 1986 or after who are currently living, working or studying in Europe. A top prize of €3,000 plus engagements across Scandinavia will be awarded to the first prize winner, and the top three competitors will also be offered the opportunity to work for a week with the Danish National Vocal Ensemble in Copenhagen followed by a broadcast concert in the city's famous Trinitatis Kirke.

The window for applications is 15 October 2019 to 14 January 2020. Further information can be found at syngsydfyn.dk and Facebook (Northern Choir Conducting Competition).

OPENING DOORS

THE ROYAL NORTHERN COLLEGE OF MUSIC'S PATHFINDER SCHEME has been shortlisted for a Times Higher Education Award, nominated in the Widening Participation or Outreach Initiative of the Year category. Initiated in 2017, the scheme aims to enable young people aged 10-16 to overcome financial, social and cultural barriers to musical progression. Beginning as a six-month pilot, Pathfinder has since developed into a three-year programme in partnership with two Manchester Music Education Hubs and the BBC Philharmonic. rncm.ac.uk

FORTHCOMING EVENTS



Autumn Initial Course

Oct-Feb, Newcastle

Tutors include Liz Garnett and Tom Leech. The course lays firm foundations for those with an interest in learning to lead singing of any kind, or who have recently started to conduct a choir.

Young Conductor Day

2 Nov, Magdalen College, Oxford

A day for anyone aged 18-25 interested in leading choirs, or who already has some conducting experience and would like to learn more. With Sarah Tenant-Flowers.

Come and Sing with Alan Bullard

16 Nov, Scunthorpe

The composer introduces works including *A Light in the Dark*, *Health and Safety* and songs from OUP's *Flexible Anthems & Choral Songs*, followed by an evening performance by Scunthorpe Male Voice Choir and Scunthorpe Co-operative Junior Choir, including two Bullard UK premieres.

Singing day with Will Todd

8 Feb, Fulwood, Preston

A singing day in the north-west with a focus on jazz. Music includes Todd's *Passion Music* and *Jazz Missa Brevis*.

Spring Initial Course

Mar-Jul, London

With Lucy Griffiths and Mark Jordan.

(i) Emerging and (ii) Progressive Courses

Mar-Sep, London

(i) For those with experience in singing and/or conducting to develop existing skills; and (ii) for those who work with at least one choir on a regular basis and wish to further develop their technique.

All **abcd** events and booking are at abcd.org.uk/events/abcd-events.

IN BRIEF

The **Los Angeles Master Chorale** has announced a challenge grant to support the organisation's mission and programmes: the Abbott L. Brown Foundation will match up to a total of US\$100,000 funded contributions to the choir's newly formed Leadership Circle of donors. lamasterchorale.org

DON BOROUGH



Noack Organ Company has completed the installation of its Opus 162 in St Peter's Church on Capitol Hill in Washington D.C. The III/42 instrument, built in collaboration with French builder Bertrand Cattiaux (see *Work in Progress*, p.62), will be dedicated by Notre-Dame de Paris organist Philippe Lefebvre at 7pm on 14 November.

The **Royal College of Music**, London, has been awarded three grants totalling almost £1m for new research projects launching in 2019/20: 'Music, Migration and Mobility: The Legacy of Migrant Musicians from Nazi Europe in Britain', 'Managing the psychological needs of families affected by the Zika virus: Exploring the impact of music as a social tool'; and a project examining the professional development of musicians and nurses through person-centred improvisation in hospital settings, in partnership with researchers in the Netherlands and Austria. rcm.ac.uk

THE MUSICAL LANDSCAPE OF GEORGIAN BRITAIN

A NEW EXHIBITION, *TWO LAST NIGHTS! SHOW BUSINESS IN GEORGIAN BRITAIN*, has launched at the Foundling Museum in London's Brunswick Square.

Curated by Katherine Hogg, librarian of the Gerald Coke Handel Collection and previous head librarian at the Royal Academy of Music, the exhibition delves into the musical and theatrical worlds of 18th-century Britain. It enables visitors to discover the practicalities and logistics of attending the theatre, an opera house or a music festival in the period, uncovering the minutiae of these lively, well-attended events.

The downstairs section of the exhibition focuses on theatre and opera houses, while the first and second floors explore Handel's legacy and offer displays such as an organ keyboard from the early 19th century, and handwritten sheets from *Messiah*.

Visitors will learn how concert halls as we know them today evolved from the benefit concerts performed in the Foundling Hospital Chapel and created to raise money for the charity. A performance of *Messiah* became an annual occurrence, propelling the

piece to the renown it continues to enjoy two centuries later. Items from the Gerald Coke Handel Collection, which boasts over 12,000 objects, will be on display.

A trip to the top floor of the Foundling Museum will inform visitors about the rise of music festivals and pleasure gardens in the Georgian era, including the birth of what is now the Three Choirs Festival. Festival-going thrived during the summers in Georgian Britain, and the displays range from the logistical details of a festival to the kinds of performances one could expect to enjoy having escaped from the hustle and bustle of London.

Speaking about what will draw classical music enthusiasts to *Two Last Nights!*, Hogg explained that there is much to learn about the birth of the choral society, the creation of space for music performance in the Georgian era and the 'bigger is better' attitude of the Victorians when it came to putting on a show.

Two Last Nights! is free with museum admission and will run from 20 September 2019 until 5 January 2020. foundlingmuseum.org.uk

▼ The Music Room at Vauxhall Gardens, as depicted in a print by Henry Roberts (1752)



© GERALD COKE HANDEL FOUNDATION

NEW EARLY MUSIC FOCUS

BBC RADIO 3'S *EARLY MUSIC NOW* programme takes a permanent position as part of the Monday afternoon schedule. The programme is dedicated to playing a range of baroque music from across Europe, with a focus on contemporary performance.

Alongside this regular programme, the radio channel has also announced the launch of a brand-new scheme, the goal of which will be to nurture young talent within early music performance. The scheme – BBC Radio 3 New Generation Baroque Ensemble – will take the form of a UK-based baroque ensemble, working with partners the National Centre for Early Music and the Royal College of Music.

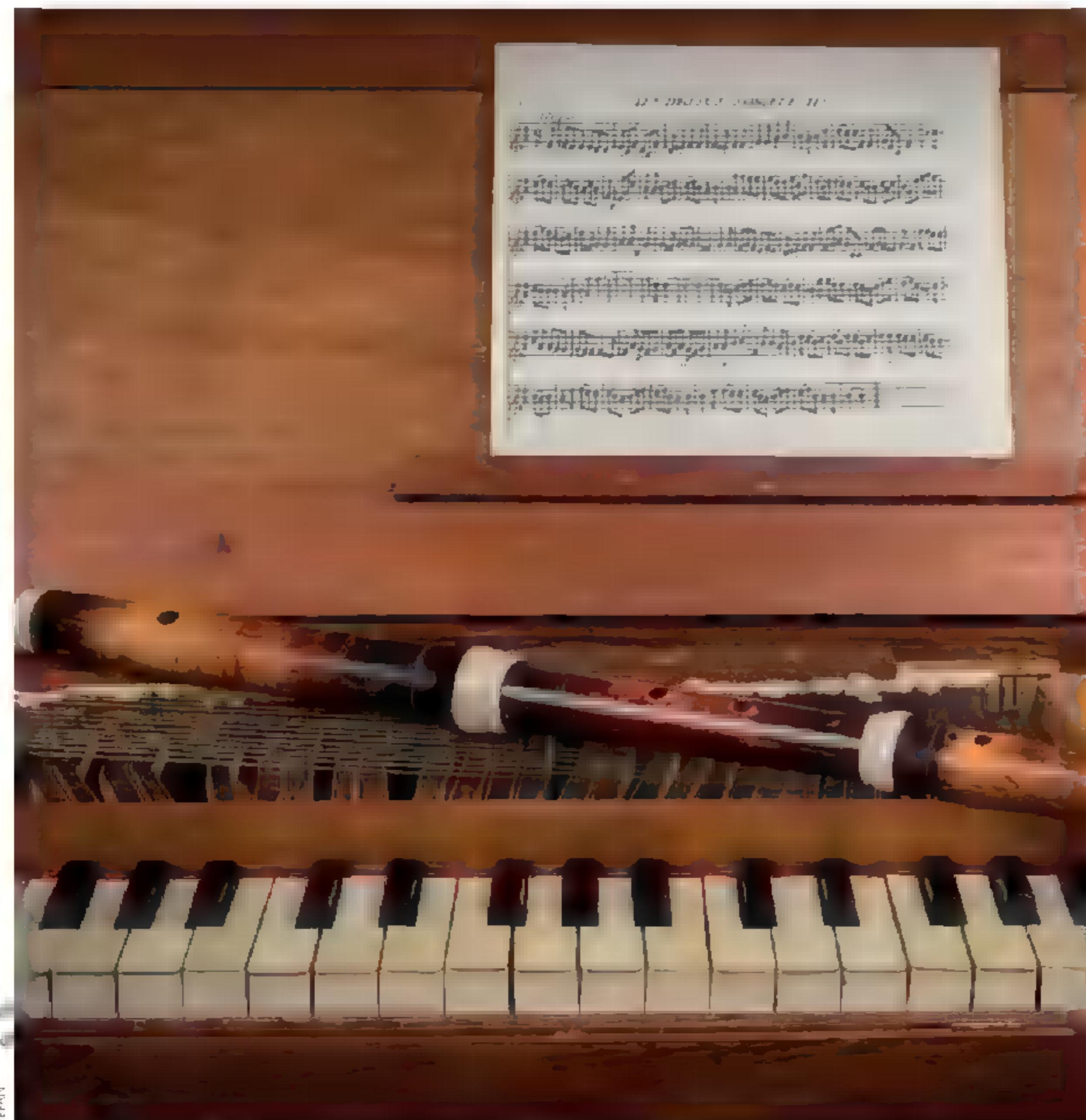
The New Generation Baroque Ensemble is envisaged as a primarily instrumental ensemble, with three to six performers all under the age of 30. During the two years of the programme, the musicians will be supported in live performance, broadcasting, mentoring and coaching.

The announcement from Radio 3 was part of a wider reveal of the station's autumn and winter scheduling, which includes three new regular programmes added alongside *Early Music Now*. These will include *Night Tracks*, *Unclassified* and a new jazz programme.

2020 will also witness a year-long focus on Beethoven, marking the 250th anniversary of the composer's birth. Called Beethoven Unleashed, the strand will recognise the composer in 25 editions of *Composer of the Week*, an unprecedented number of dedications.

Early Music Now was launched on 16 September and airs every Monday afternoon at 4.30pm thereafter. Participants for the New Generation Baroque Ensemble will be selected via talent-spotting, appraisal and recommendation; there is no audition or application process.

More information about *Early Music Now* can be found at bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0008gtt.



EVENTS



Daniel Hyde, the new director of music at King's College, Cambridge, gives his first concert in the post on 6 Nov, when the King's College Choir joins forces with the Academy of Ancient Music in an all-Handel programme (6 Nov, King's College Chapel).

St Albans International Organ Festival presents a recital by the internationally renowned harpsichordist **Carole Cerasi** at 5.30pm on 23 Nov at St Michael's Church, St Albans. Details from 01727 844765.

Brighton Festival Chorus gives the London premiere of **John Tavener's Invocations and Last Word** on 3 Nov at St John's Smith Square. Scored for four choirs, the work was commissioned by the Northern Voices Choral Festival in Canada in 2005. The concert, which starts at 3pm, also includes Fauré's Requiem and *Cantique de Jean Racine*, among other works. Tickets from 020 7222 1061, sjss.org.uk or bfc.org.uk.

Sing for Pleasure is running a weekend course for singers, conductors and vocal leaders at Mere Hall, Bolton on 2-3 Nov. Alongside the choral conducting course are courses in orchestral conducting and musicianship for singers. SfP is also running a London Community Choir Showcase on 16 Nov in St Peter's, Eaton Square; non-auditioned choirs from across the UK will each perform a 12-minute programme, critiqued by a panel of adjudicators, and join in a massed sing. singforpleasure.org.uk

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EARLY MUSIC FESTIVAL PREVIEW



▲ The exhibition venue at Blackheath Halls hosts performances on an array of early musical instruments

THE LONDON INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF EARLY MUSIC will run from 7-9 November in Blackheath Halls and surrounding venues.

Thursday will see Tinka Pypker and Anders Muskens, joint winners of the Early Music Young Ensemble Competition,

return to perform their winners' recital, as well as a recorder workshop with Sarah Jeffery, enabling participants to learn new techniques. A concert from the vocal ensemble Solomon's Knot (see feature p.34) will close the first day of events. Friday's programme includes demonstration

recitals, as well as the final of the Moeck/Society of Recorder Players Solo Recorder Competition, which will take place at All Saints' Church, Blackheath. Red Priest are to perform on the Friday evening, offering a programme of baroque classics with a contemporary twist.

The final day of the festival will offer concerts from Elizabeth Kenny, Palisander and a finale from the Thomas Tallis Society Choir and Orchestra of The Sixteen, taking place in Greenwich.

Running alongside the festival is the UK's largest exhibition of early music, gathering over 100 instrument makers from around the world, showcasing a large selection of instruments, shops, music publishers and forums. Items will be available for visitors to purchase, including an array of early musical instruments, sheet music, CDs and books.

The festival has been taking place in London since 1973, and having moved from the Old Royal Naval College to Blackheath in 2016, the festival continues to bring early music to its new location in south-east London.

For the full festival programme and to book tickets, visit earlymusicshop.com.

CELEBRATIONS AT THE QUEEN'S COLLEGE

THE CHAPEL AT THE QUEEN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD, celebrates its 300th anniversary this November with a variety of events open to the public.

Beginning in October and running until Saturday 9 November, most Chapel 300 events are free of charge.

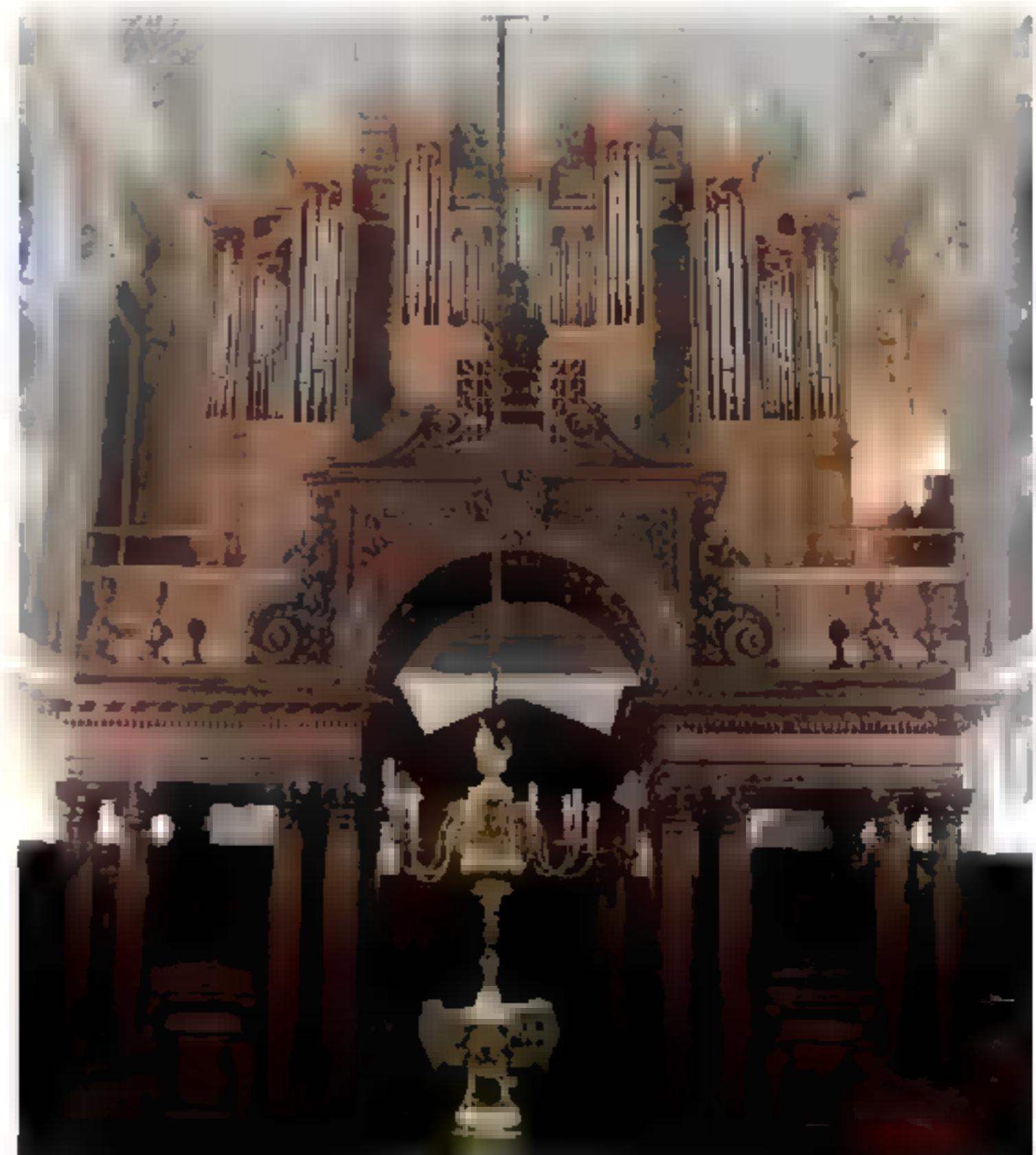
Following a live broadcast of Choral Evensong with the College Choir to launch the celebrations (30 Oct), and an organ recital by David Goode (31 Oct), there will be a commemoration service with the Archbishop of York on Sunday 3 November, when the 300th anniversary falls.

Anne Page and Crispian Steele-Perkins give an organ and trumpet recital on 6 November, with music by Henry Purcell and Jeremiah Clarke, and showcasing the sound of the silver trumpet presented to the college in 1666.

On 9 November, the chapel presents a half-day seminar, with speakers Dr Geoffrey Tyack, the Revd Canon Dr Andrew Braddock, the Revd Prof. William Whyte, and Prof. Owen Rees. The final Chapel 300 event is a celebratory concert of music written around 1719, featuring The Queen's College Choir, Stephen Farr (organ and harpsichord) and Instruments of Time and Truth, conducted by Owen Rees.

Further details at queens.ox.ac.uk/chapel-300.

► The Chapel of The Queen's College, Oxford, celebrates its anniversary with 300 years of music



BASELSTONE

WALTHAM ABBEY

The last weekend of September 2019 saw the culmination of our project to rejuvinate the J.W. Walker organ at Waltham Abbey in Essex.

On the Saturday evening, organist Jonathan Lilley presented a well-balanced programme of transcriptions and original works (including a new commission) to a packed and enthralled audience. An equally full congregation reassembled the following morning to witness the instrument's dedication by the Bishop of Chelmsford at a Eucharist, the setting for which was Vierne's

A year-long festival of events to showcase the organ has been planned; details can be found at www.walthamabbeychurches.org/2019/festival.htm



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WEDNESDAYS AT 5.55
Organ Recitals at the Royal Festival Hall

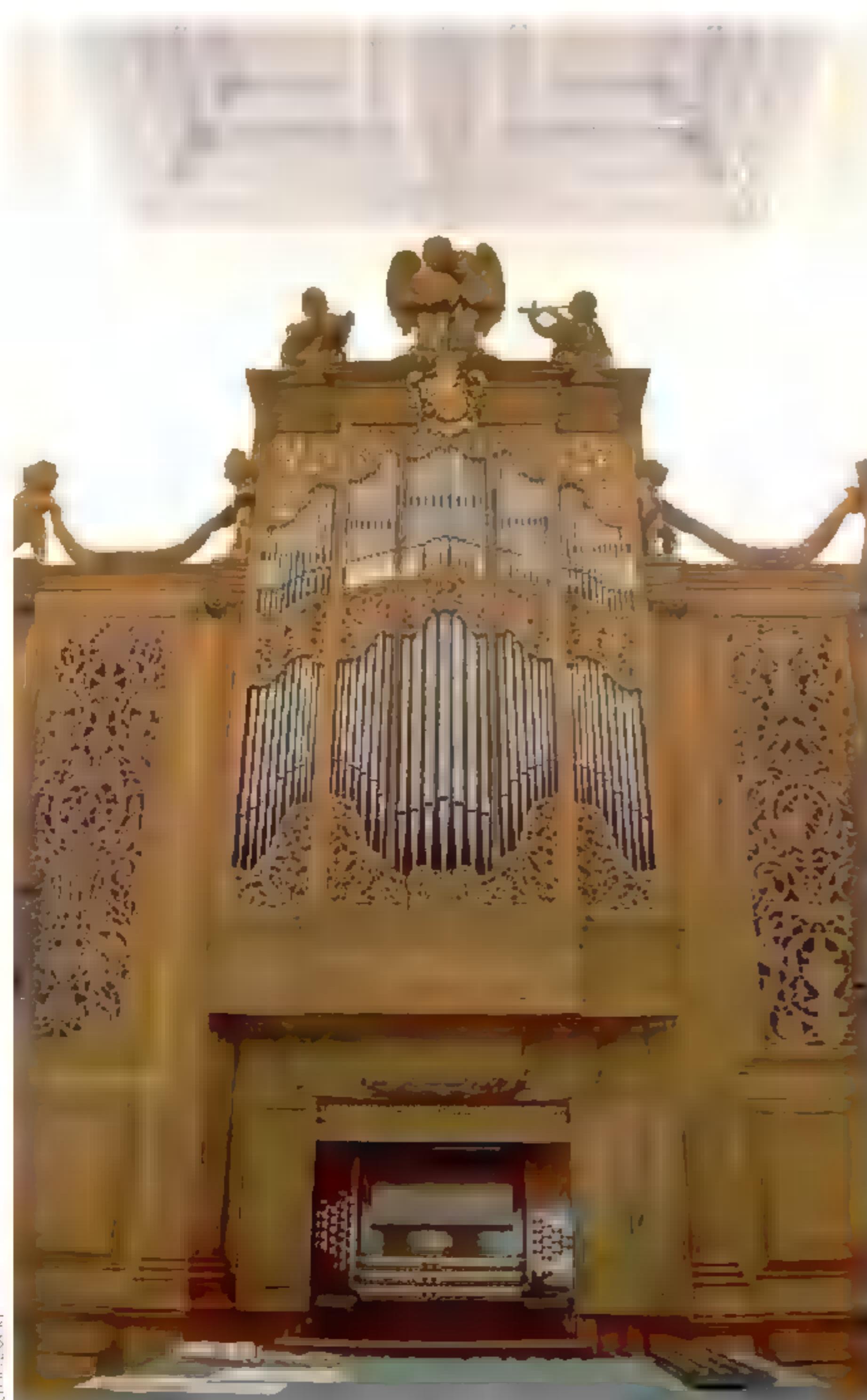


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THOMAS TROTTER PLAYS AT MARCHMONT



CHARLES DAWSON

THOMAS TROTTER WILL PERFORM AT MARCHMONT HOUSE on 6 November to celebrate the centenary of the Palladian mansion's concert organ and Music Room.

Marchmont House (see *C&O* July/August 2018), in the Scottish Borders, was bought by Robert Finnie McEwen in 1912. It is known as a home for makers and creators, having undergone a makeover in 1919 by the Scottish architect and furniture designer Sir Robert Lorimer, a leading figure in the arts and crafts movement. During these renovations a Music Room of grand proportions was designed, featuring an early example of a Hill, Norman & Beard pipe organ, housed in a richly decorated Lorimer case including exquisitely carved pipe-shades.

As part of an eight-year restoration at Marchmont, the three-manual organ recently underwent an overhaul, which saw the repair of its 1,962 pipes by Rosyth's Forth Pipe Organs Ltd. The organ had become unplayable after almost 100 years of service and the 18-month project was able to restore it to its former high standard.

Hugo Burge, director of Marchmont Farms Ltd, owners of Marchmont House, said, 'The Music Room and organ are such important parts of Lorimer's arts and crafts heritage here at Marchmont that we felt their centenary deserved to be recognised through the talents of a virtuoso like Thomas Trotter.'

The recital is one of several events aimed at showcasing creativity and craftsmanship in the arts and business.

Burge added, 'Sir Robert Lorimer's influence has been one of the inspirations behind our vision for Marchmont as a place where craftsmanship, creativity, sustainability and community are celebrated and encouraged, so we hope that the public will join us for what promises to be a wonderful evening of music in an inspiring and historic setting.'

The concert, which includes works by J.S. Bach and Edward Elgar, is open to the public; tickets are available at [eventbrite.co.uk](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk).

◀ An early example of a Hill, Norman & Beard organ in the Music Room of Marchmont House

RCO COURSES

AUTUMN COURSES organised by the Royal College of Organists include a Choir Training Workshop with David Hill (pictured; 2 Nov, Newark); From Rococo to Romanticism (2 Nov, Thaxted Parish Church); Christmas is coming! (2 Nov, Plymouth); Touch and Technique (9 Nov, central London); Walond and his contemporaries (16 Nov, Oxford); Improvisation for Beginners (23 Nov, Durham); Preparing for CRCO, ARCO and FRCO (23 Nov, Dulwich, London); and Console management (30 Nov, central London). ro.org.uk/events



CHARLES DAWSON

WORLD PREMIERE OF MISERERE

CELEBRATIONS AROUND SIR KARL JENKINS'S 75TH BIRTHDAY continue with the world premiere of *Miserere: Songs of Mercy and Redemption* at St Luke's Church, Grayshott, on Friday 29 November. The work features Stephen Layton directing his choir Polyphony, counter-tenor Iestyn Davies, cellist Abel Selaocoe, harpist Catrin Finch and the Britten Sinfonia.



DANIEL COOPER

The CD recording of the work, released on Friday 11 October, is dedicated to all those who have suffered during the conflicts in the Middle East over the last 70 years. Jenkins believes in the potential for music to bring together people from different religions and cultures and hopes that this collection of pieces will evoke unity and healing.

Conductor Stephen Layton said of *Miserere*, 'There is something very enduring and uniquely wonderful here, which I love. I'm honoured to have had the opportunity to record this fantastic music.'

Earlier celebrations included a sold-out concert at the Royal Albert Hall, featuring several of Jenkins's most popular works, from *The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace* and the *6000 Pipes!* organ concerto to *Palladio* and excerpts from his 2017 album *Symphonic Adiemus*. Audience members also heard selections from the score of the CD before the world premiere had taken place.

Jenkins's compositions for choir, soloists and orchestra are some of the most popular works in the genre by any living composer. His *The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace* has been performed over 2,500 times and his *Adiemus* series has achieved worldwide renown. In the course of his career, Jenkins has achieved 17 golden and platinum disc awards, and he was knighted by the Queen in 2015.

The Armenian premiere of *Symphonic Adiemus* will also take place on Friday 8 November 2019, performed by the Armenian State Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, conducted by Jenkins.

Sir Karl Jenkins's music is published by Boosey & Hawkes: boosey.com.

■ Jenkins believes in music's potential to bring people together

PREMIERES [RP = REGIONAL PREMIERE]

Eriks Ešenvalds: Be Still My Heart ('Finlandia', arr.)
Highland Park Chorale, Dallas/Hobbs
1 Nov, Highland Park Presbyterian Church, Dallas, TX, US

Judith Weir: The Big Picture
Con Anima, local performers, Joanna Nicholson (cl), Lisa Nicol (perc), Jeremy Coleman (pno)/Williams & Horton
2 Nov, Aberdeen Art Gallery, UK

Eriks Ešenvalds: The Soldier's Grave
New Dublin Voices/Sherlock
2 Nov, Newman University Church, Dublin, IE

Eriks Ešenvalds: The Beatitudes
Cathedral Choir of St Philip, Atlanta/Adelmann
3 Nov, Cathedral of St Philip, Atlanta, GA, US

Ludger Vollmer: Ein Jegliches hat seine Zeit
Christel Loetzsch (s), Alik Abdukayumov (b-bar), Kantorei St Michael Jena, Mitteldeutsches Kammerorchester, Martin Meier (org)/Vollmer
3 Nov, St Michael, Jena, DE

James MacMillan: Stabat Mater [RP]
James MacMillan: Miserere [RP]
The Sixteen, Britten Sinfonia/Christophers
7 Nov, Lincoln Center, New York City, US

Karl Jenkins: Symphonic Adiemus [RP]
Armenian State SO & Chorus/Jenkins
8 Nov, Aram Khachaturian Concert Hall, Yerevan, AM

Sasha Johnson Manning: In the Land of Song (How Su Shi Discovered Dong-Po Pork)
Saint Louis Chamber Chorus/Barnes
10 Nov, The Link Auditorium, St Louis, MO, US

Phillip Cooke: Dream Tryst [RP]
University of Aberdeen Chamber Choir/Paul
12 Nov, King's College Chapel, Aberdeen, UK

James MacMillan: Miserere [RP]
Coro Casa da Música/Hillier
17 Nov, Casa da Música, Porto, PT

Bob Chilcott: Angel voices ever singing
Choirs of Westminster Abbey, Westminster Cathedral, and St Paul's Cathedral/O'Donnell
20 Nov, Westminster Abbey, London, UK

Magnus Lindberg: Triumph to Exist [RP]
Orch & Choir of the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia/Afkham
21 Nov, Parco della Musica, Rome, IT

Kim André Arnesen: Voices of the Silenced
New Hampshire Master Chorale
22 Nov, venue TBC, New Hampshire, US

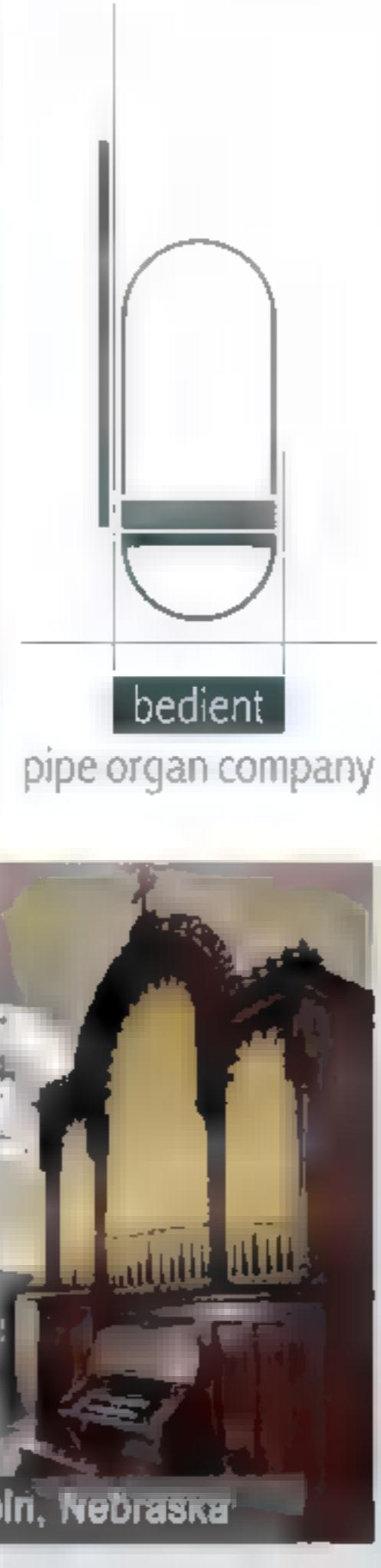
Eric Whitacre: The Boy Who Laughed [Santa Claus] [new version]
Distinguished Concerts International New York/Whitacre
24 Nov, Carnegie Hall, New York City, US

Karl Jenkins: Miserere: Songs of Mercy and Redemption [complete work]
Iestyn Davies (c-t) Polyphony, Britten Sinfonia, Catrin Finch (hp), Abel Selaocoe (vc)/Layton
29 Nov, St Luke's Church, Grayshott, UK

Judith Bingham: Hark the Glad Sound
St John's College Choir/Nethsingha
30 Nov, St John's College Chapel, Cambridge, UK

Please email items for News and Letters to the Editor for publication in future issues to maggie.hamilton@markallengroup.com, or post to The Editor, Choir & Organ, Mark Allen Group, St Jude's Church, Dulwich Road, London SE24 0PB, UK.

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October 6-18, 2020

www.ciocm.org

Canadian International Organ Competition

The Competition is open to all organists born after October 17, 1995. Deadline for the Preliminary Round is January 31, 2020 (date of postmark).

Prizes

1st Prize: \$25,000 plus Solo Award including 100% scholarship and three year concert management and participation development by Cami McSparran and the CIOC.

2nd Prize: \$15,000

3rd Prize: \$10,000

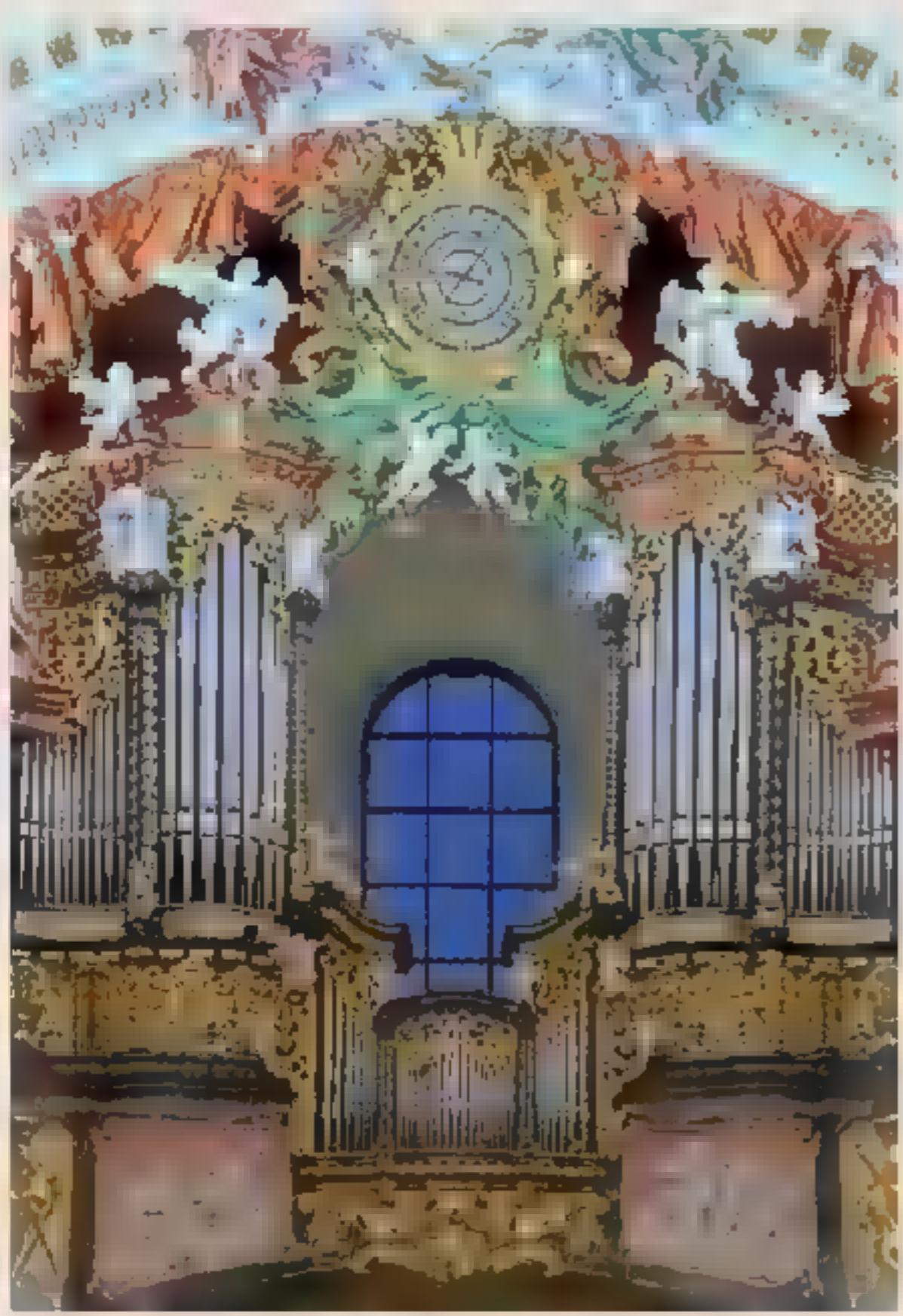
There will be numerous smaller prizes, including and international organ building competition for the best organ and participation competition for the best organ in the Musical.

There will be numerous smaller prizes, including and international organ building competition for the best organ and participation competition for the best organ in the Musical.

Application forms, regulations and further information at www.ciocm.org.



ciocm2020



The main organ in the Cistercian abbey of Wilhering, Austria, was built by Leopold Breinbauer in 1884, his first significant large organ. **Orgelbau Kuhn**'s restoration aimed to respect the character of the organ, while replacing any damaged components. The organ remains part of the everyday life of the church today.



This organ in St Peter's Cathedral, Adelaide, has been thoroughly restored by **Harrison ■ Harrison** with the aim of preserving its original style and character. A new electrical system and case have been provided, and four new stops, based on the original pipe scales and tonal aesthetic, have been added.

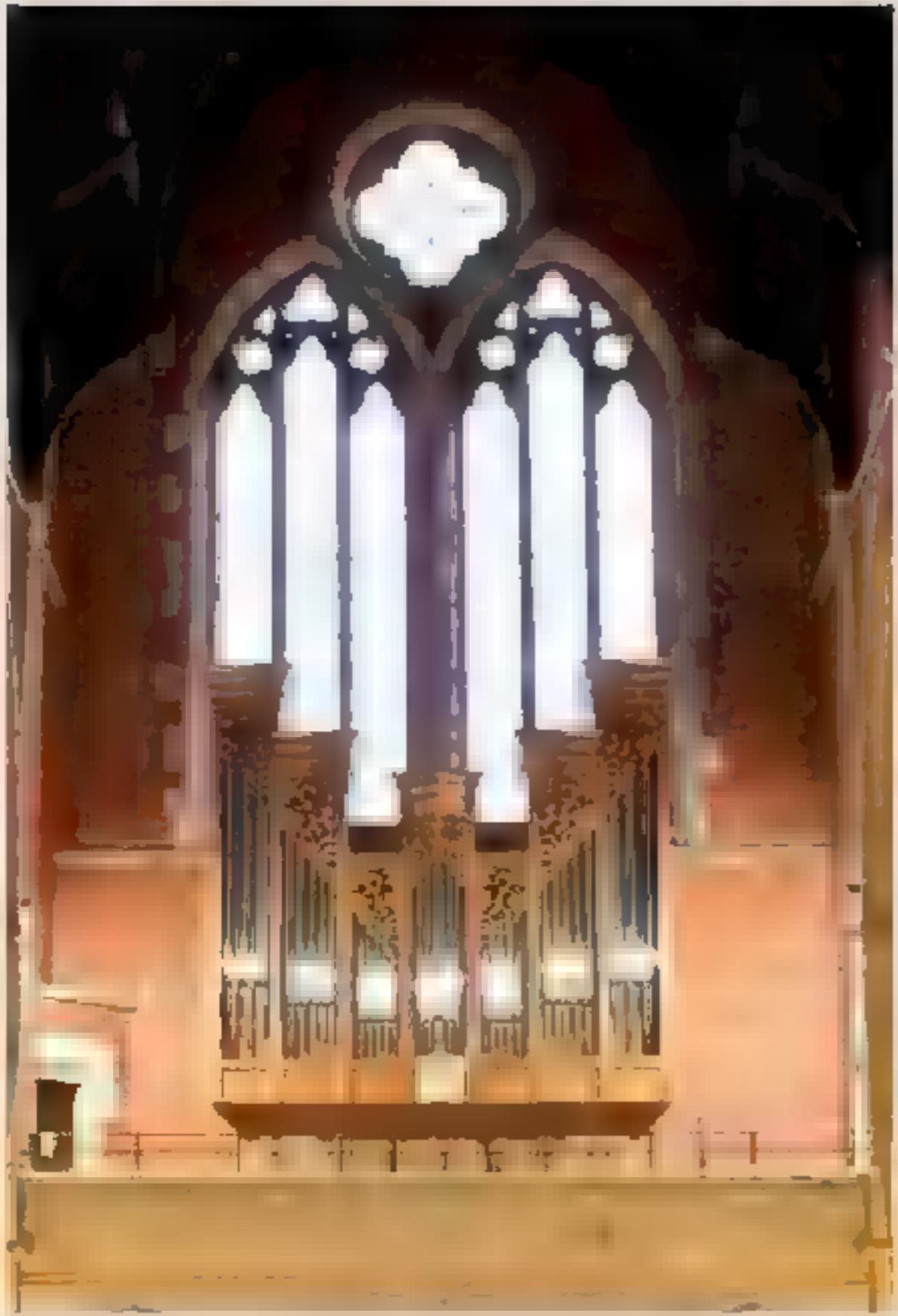


The Fr Willis organ, with casework by George Gilbert Scott, was installed in King's College Chapel, London, in 1866. **Mander Organs** have combined the best of the Willis pipework with new ranks on new soundboards, restored the painted façade pipes, and provided a new detached console.

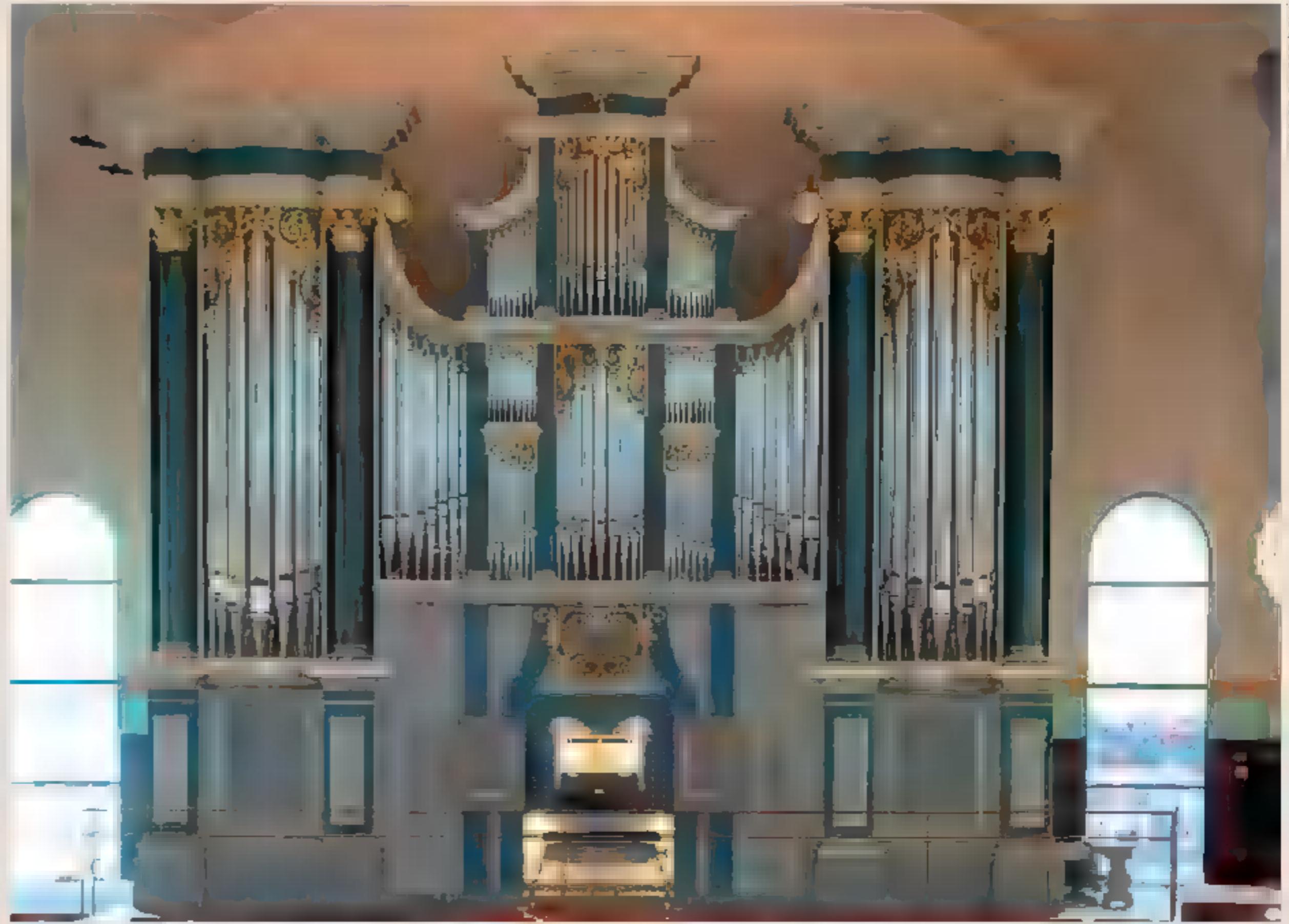


2020 Calendar

A new **Skrabl** organ, completed in 2019, has been installed in the Church of the Holy Rood, Barnsley, South Yorkshire. The oak-cased instrument of 12 speaking stops has mechanical key action and electric stop action; it is located on the west gallery of the church.

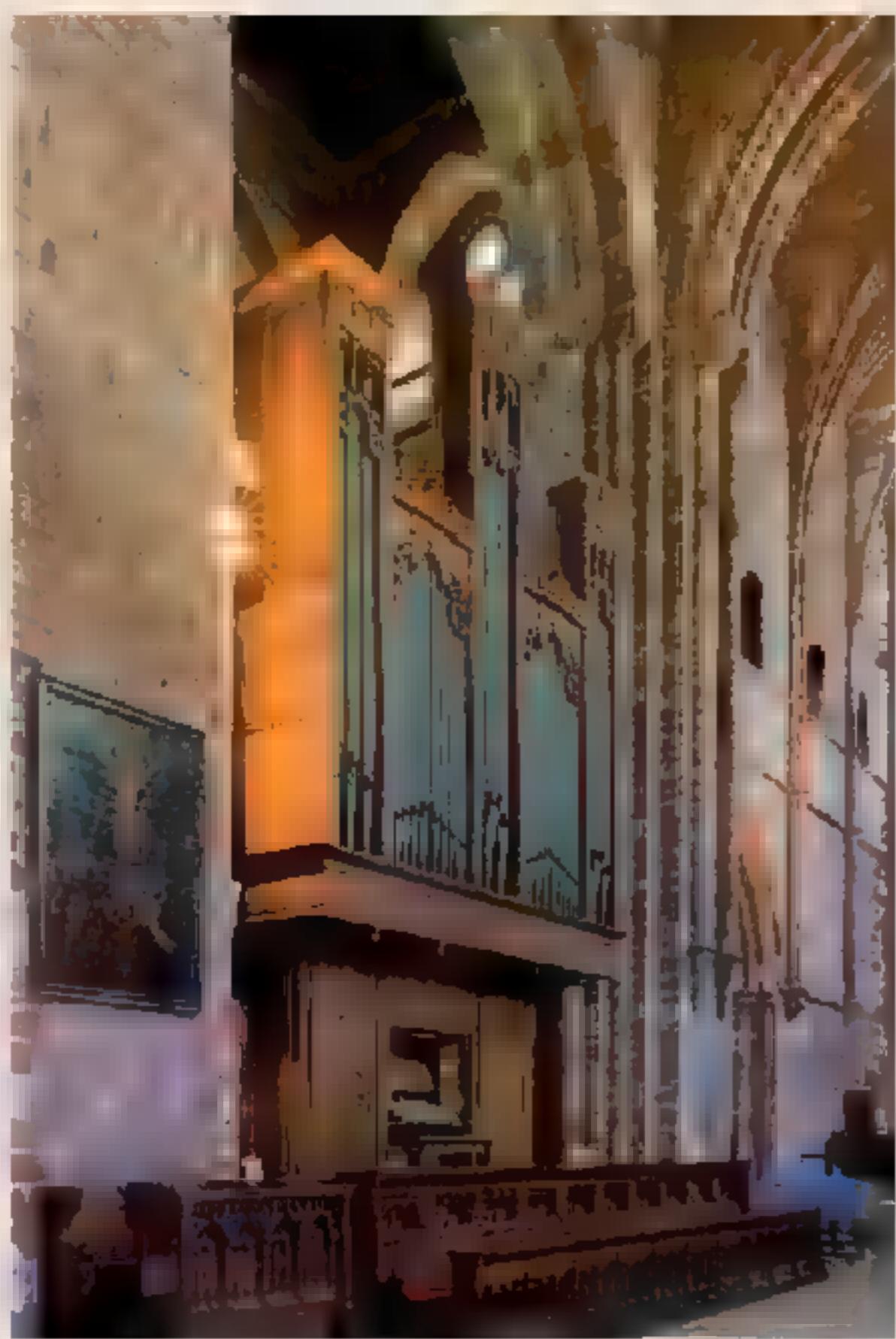


The **Utopia Baroque Organ** was built by an international consortium in the style of Zacharias Hildebrandt. Constructed according to the principles of process reconstruction, the organ also embraces digital technology, via a second console, to provide the means for musicians of all creeds to create new music.

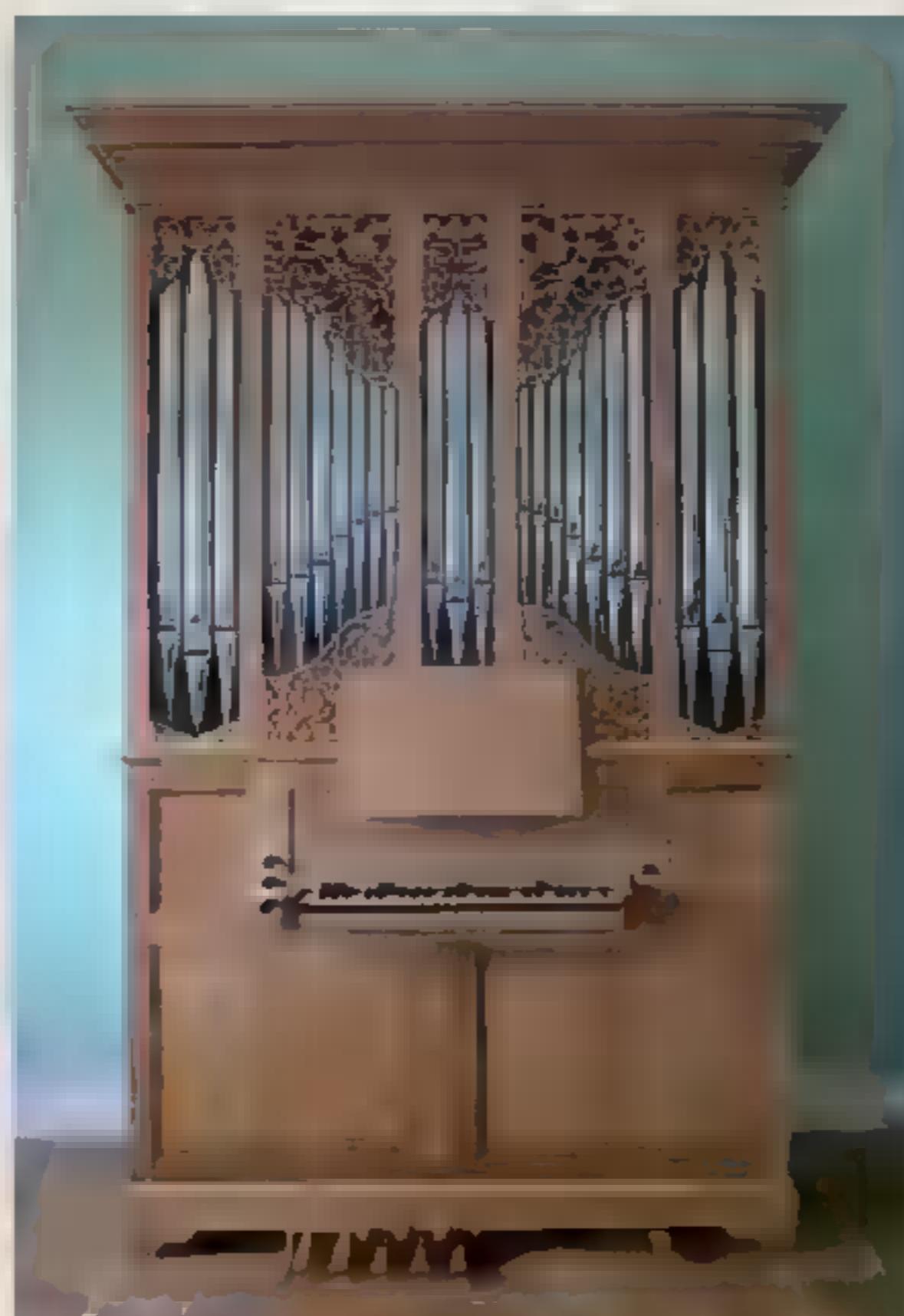


JOHN DAWY

JACQUELINE OSKAMP



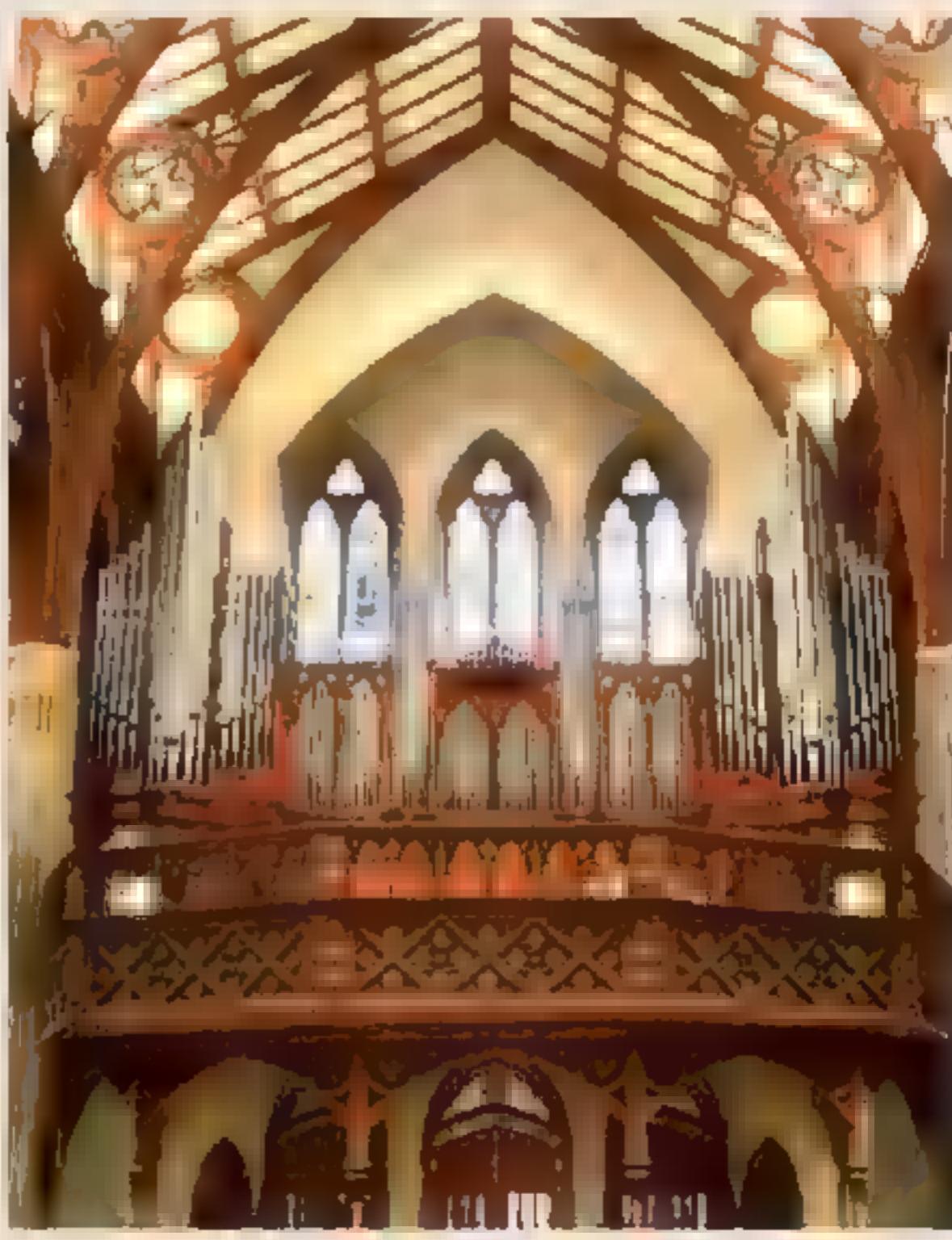
This William Hill & Sons organ was installed in the north side of the chancel of the Abbey Church of SS Peter & Paul, Shrewsbury, in 1911. The organ remains unfinished and requires restoration and renovation. **GO Organs** begin phase 1 – cleaning and overhaul – at Easter 2020.



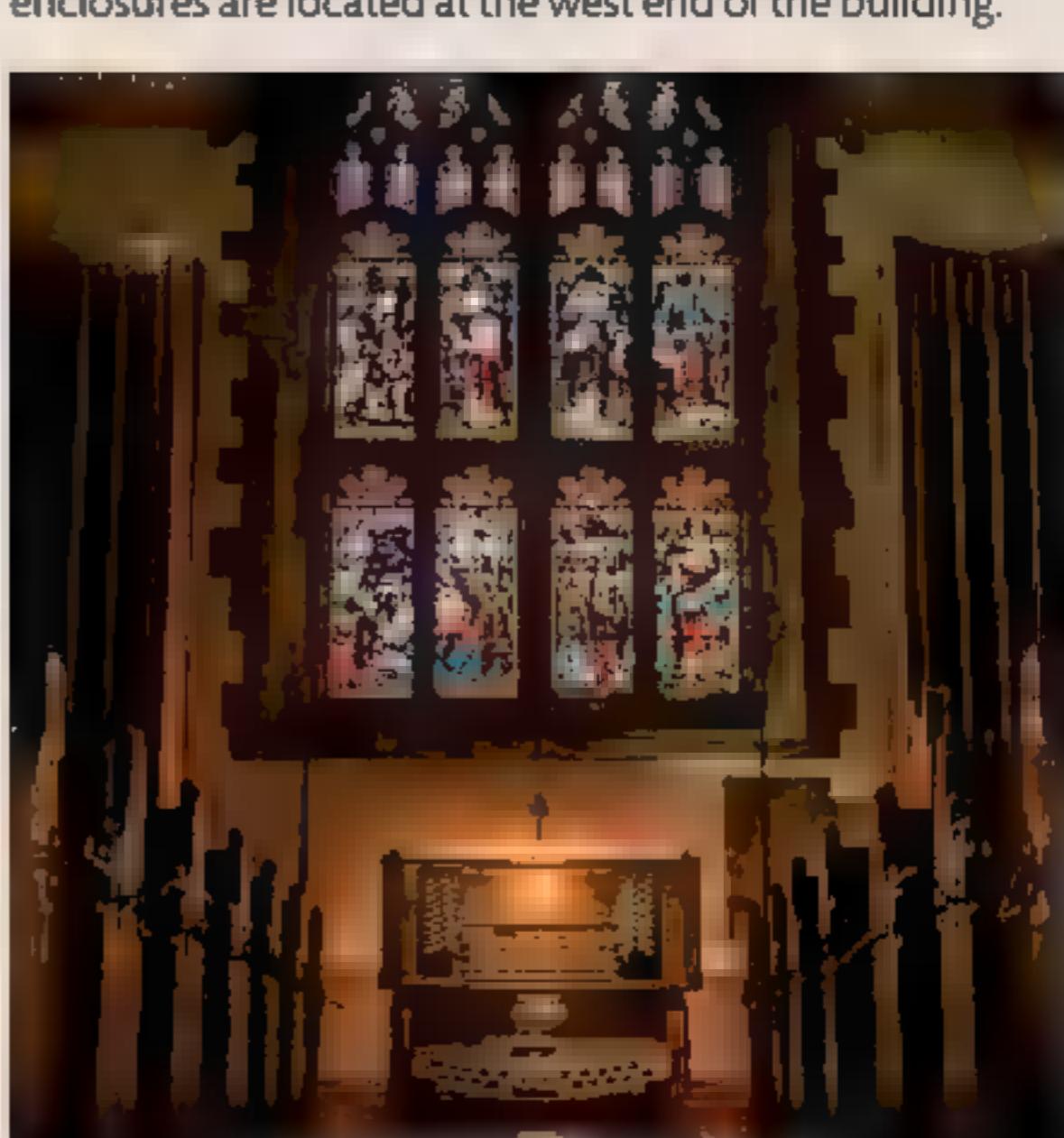
This 2006 **Goetze ■ Gwynn** chamber organ is one of two for the music room of a player of early keyboard music. It was built in 17th-century English style, with an open metal chorus and a wooden Stop Diapason. It has meantone tuning, and a keyboard with a short broken bass octave, and split keys.



Schantz Organ Company was commissioned to re-imagine Estey Organ Company's Opus 1318 (1914), built for 'Fair Lane', the estate of car manufacturer Henry Ford. Built from a factory photograph and historical documentation, the console/keydesk is shown in the workshop prior to delivery.

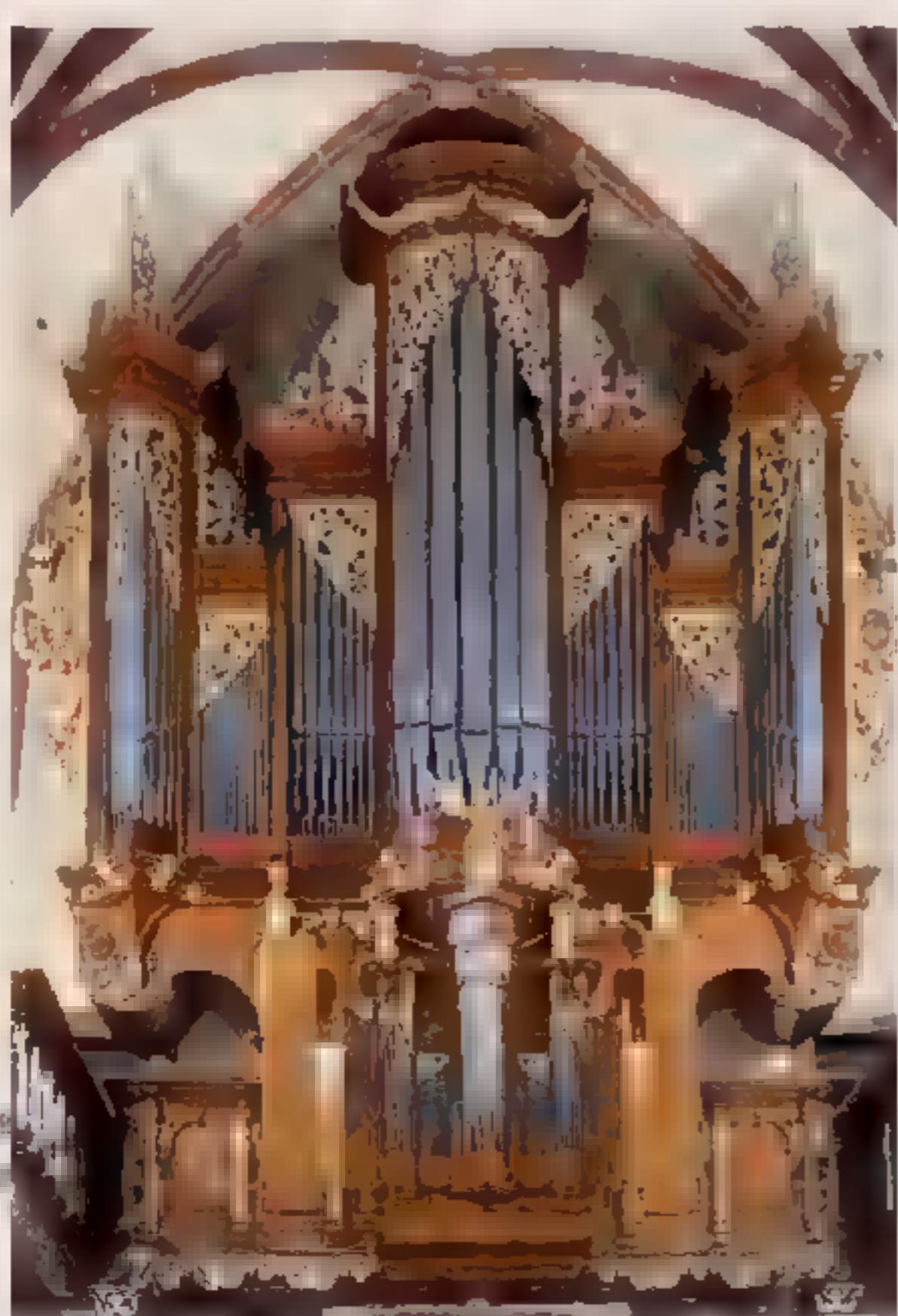


This new **Buzard** organ graces the renovated Sanctuary in Central United Methodist Church, Fayetteville, Arkansas. Half of the Great Division is enclosed, and can be coupled to any console location, acting like a Choir Division. The third manual is a Solo Division.



This organ for a church in Paterson, NJ, has seen additions from each of the four generations of **Peragallo**s to bring it to the instrument it is today. The organ includes 53 ranks and 3,000 speaking pipes from 32ft to a half inch.

Copeman Hart met the parish needs of St Mary's, Barnard Castle, with a 57-stop digital organ built in oak. The three manuals have been given a tracker touch. The drawstop console and ornate custom-built speaker enclosures are located at the west end of the building.





Double take

Amsterdam's new Utopia Baroque Organ was built in the style of Zacharias Hildebrandt, but also embraces digital technology, via a second console. **Chris Bragg** visits the Orgelpark



Having been peripherally involved with the Orgelpark in Amsterdam since its opening in 2007, I have observed in astonishment as the idiosyncratic notion of a performance venue with the sole purpose of returning the organ to the mainstream of musical conscience has grown into a quite distinctive phenomenon of its own. Thanks to the financial backing of Loek Dijkman's Utopa

Foundation and the creative brains of artistic director Johan Luijmes and musicologist Hans Fidom (who also holds the Orgelpark-funded Chair of Organ Studies at the city's Free University), it has developed an intensive, broad and even experimental programme of events in the art-deco splendour of the former Parkkerk. Audiences have grown too, a hardcore of at least 120 now supporting events as diverse, in the coming season, as solo organ concerts, copious new music events including composer portraits, 'organ-plus' concerts (soprano, accordion, choir, mixed ensemble etc) and symposia around Hammond organs and historic voicing techniques. The spectacular collection of hardware has grown in parallel: the original church building's exceptionally reconstructed 1922 Sauer organ is complemented by a Verschueren-built French symphonic organ and a much discussed reconstruction of the 15th-century Gerritsz organ built for the Nicolaikerk in Utrecht. Such is the laboratorial nature of the Orgelpark, a recent research report (yes, research is a Big Thing too) comprehensively dismantled the rationale behind many of the choices made in that particular seven-figure investment.

There was an obvious gap, however, in providing for the music of the 17th and 18th centuries, and especially that of Bach. A project board and exceptionally broad reference group was established (including organists, organ builders and experts such as Ibo Ortgies and the late Peter Williams), with their initial findings discussed in a series of public colloquia. A guiding principle of the project was the application of the process reconstruction philosophy established in Gothenburg at the end of the last century and later applied in the Casparini-copy at Rochester and the Schnitger-copy at Cornell; historic material not simply imitated but the processes, rationales and culture which propagated it absorbed and applied too. Having undertaken various study trips and flirted both with the Schnitger style and the notion of a dual-temperament organ (too heavy for the gallery due to the extra pipes required), a trip to Naumburg proved pivotal; seduced in particular by the rich variety of 8ft and 4ft colour, the organ would be based on the work of Zacharias Hildebrandt and, intriguingly, built by a consortium. Elbertse of Zeist (who had restored the Sauer organ) would build the case, winding system, chests and action. Eule, who had restored the organ in Naumburg and who, in Helmut Werner, had a Hildebrandt-expert with a vast knowledge of his scaling, pipe constructions and voicing techniques, would make the pipes. The voicing would be carried out by Munetaka Yokota, the genius behind the sounds heard in Gothenburg, Rochester and Cornell: 'He had proven he could make new pipes that sound like old ones,' as the research report relates. The specification

► The Utopa Baroque Organ with (below) the Molzer salon organ of 1925 and (right) the three-manual Verschueren French-symphonic style organ of 2009



◀ would be based on the lost 1749 organ at Hettstedt, but with some modifications, including the Fagott 16ft in the Hauptwerk and – the committee having been won over by the Naumburg example – an Unda Maris in the Oberwerk. In practice, however, this stop departed significantly from the model, the Orgelpark Oberwerk being a 4ft division with the resulting absence of a full-length beating partner. Instead, Trost's Unda Maris, as described by Adlung in his *Musica mechanica Organoedi* (1768) – a wooden stop with a single pipe-foot, two mouths and a separation in the pipe body – was chosen. The result is marvellously ethereal. There being no surviving reed stops by Hildebrandt, examples had to be chosen from elsewhere. The Fagott and Vox Humana are based on those made by Helmut Werner at Naumburg, which in turn draw on Adlung's descriptions. The remainder are based on stops by Hildebrandt's teacher, Gottfried Silbermann. The pipe

This is an organ whose sound is both broad and resonant; expressive in a way reminiscent of the best historic organs and almost never found in new ones

metal was cast on linen, as Hildebrandt seems to have done, and planed by hand. Hettstedt also provided the model for the case, although the proportions were adapted to accommodate the slightly larger specification and the bellows in the base. The colour-scheme is modelled, following intensive research by Hilke Frach-Renner, on the organ at Langhennersdorf, which also provided the model for the wood carvings.

In the context of the central German, and especially Thüringian, organ, the interaction of expressive elements in the sound of the flue pipes – initial transient, fundamental sound and background sound – is even more obviously character-determining than in the Schnitger-related organs I discussed last month. The articulate, 'speechy' nature of the Naumburg organ is well acknowledged and even criticised; was this a part of the Hildebrandt style or the taste of its restorer? The Orgelpark team embraced it as a key expressive agent of the former: 'A certain "wildness" might even be considered an essential element of the sound's inherent interest,' notes Hans Fidom. Werner and Yokota's research revealed that Hildebrandt employed three basic scales; certain principals (for example that in the Naumburg Rückpositive) are especially narrow,

contributing to an overtone-rich sound. Other aspects play critical roles in the make-up of this complex sound picture; the geometry of the pipe-mouth with overbite and high languid position renders it especially bright. Yokota perceived four specific varieties of initial speech characteristics in Hildebrandt's flues, categorising them, onomatopoeically, as 'chiff', 'cough', 'hiss' and 'hiccup' (for example, certain off-note wooden pipes). Slowest of all is the Violdigamba, the illusion of bow being drawn across string disarming. The variety and prominence of initial transient in the 8ft Principal is also significantly colour-determining, even in combination with other stops.

The genius of Yokota is profoundly evident here. In order to voice pipes based on Hildebrandt's models in the smaller space while maintaining such a sophisticated vocabulary of sound properties, the wind pressure, at 63mm, is lower than on any surviving Hildebrandt organ. The sound is relaxed, nothing speaks with haste. Like in Wiefelstede (q.v. the October issue) and despite a voicing process lasting on-and-off for a total of 18 months, there is no sense of sound sanitisation, even within individual ranks. 'We just kept listening to the music,' says Fidom, 'and at a certain point we stopped and said, "This is good".' Yokota has walked here the most challenging of tightropes and succeeded spectacularly. This is an organ whose sound is both broad and resonant; expressive in a way reminiscent of the best historic organs and almost never found in new ones. The plena are not simply brilliant and well balanced but also rough-hewn, complex, challenging.

But this wouldn't be the Orgelpark without a very significant twist. From the very earliest stages, and in line with its broader mission, it was determined that the organ would be a vehicle for musicians of all sorts to create new music. The idea of using digital technology to make resources available in ways entirely independent of an organ's tonal structure had already been applied in Ratingen (rebuilt Seifert, 2012), Düsseldorf-Oberkassel (Mühleisen, 2016), Würzburg (Hochschule, Klais, 2016) and Piteå (Studio Acusticum, Woehl, 2012). Malmö (Klais) has since followed suit. Applying the technology, developed by the Sinua company of Düsseldorf, to a historic sound concept had already been attempted at the Orgelpark: in 2011 a second, digital console was built for the Sauer organ, working alongside the original pneumatic console and key action. The console allows the Sauer's stops to be used independently of their 'home' manual and has now been rebuilt to accommodate the new organ as well. Following the Ratingen project, the ambition arose for the new Orgelpark organ to take the 'hyper-organ' concept (as christened by American researcher Randall Harlow) a step further, by making

any individual pipe available on any key or pedal. To achieve this, an extraordinary decision was taken: to equip the organ with a technology considered obsolete by Hildebrandt's era, namely the spring-chest. This had the advantage of having a single, secondary pallet per pipe, traditionally part of the stop action rather than the key action. The individual pallets in the Orgelpark organ therefore have a dual function. When played from the mechanical console, they act in the traditional way, opening to allow wind to enter the note channels. From the digital console, however, they act as key pallets. For this reason, the primary pallets are permanently open and the note channels

◀ The mechanical console with the keys in lowered position for use from the digital console. The font on the stop knobs is copied from that found in Naumburg; the knobs themselves are 3mm broader to aid readability ▶

Utopa Baroque Organ, Orgelpark, Amsterdam

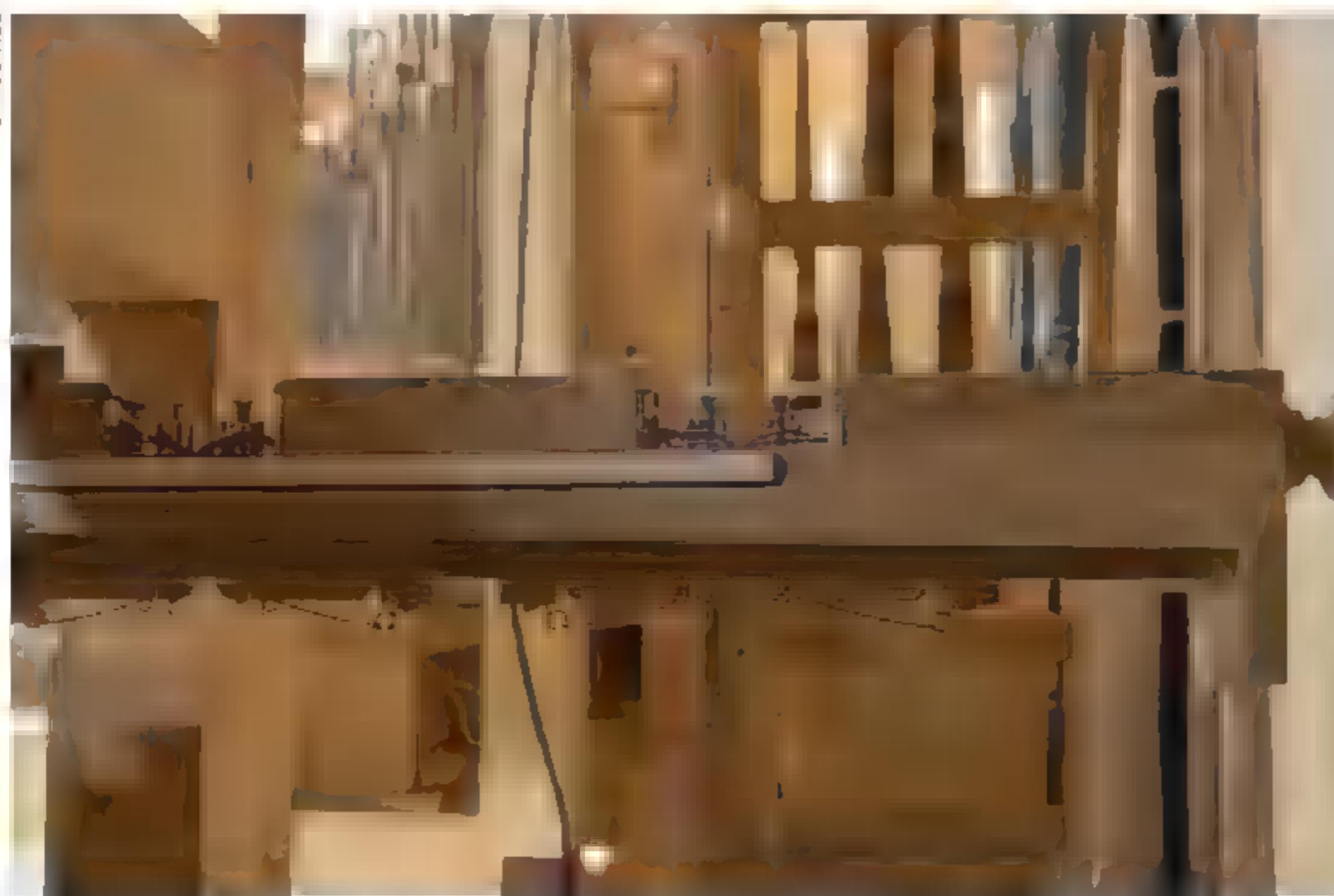
ELBERTSE ORGELMAKERS / HERMANN EULE ORGELBAU /
MUNETAKA YOKOTA / SINUA (2018)

HAUPTWERK			
Principal	8	Quint bass	12
Burdun	16	Octav	8
Rohrflött	8	Posaune	16
Quintatthen	8	Posaune	8
Octav	4	Clarin	4
Gemshorn	4	Nachtigall	
Weit Pfeiffe	2	Cymbelstern	
Sexquint altra	II	Couplers	
Mixtur	V	'Shove' inter-manual coupler	
Cymbel	III	Pedal coupler (mechanical)	
Cornett	IV		
Fagott	16	Compasses	
Trompet	8	Manuals: C-d3 (mechanical console)/	
Tremulant		C-a3 (digital console)	
		Pedal: C-d1 (mechanical console)/	
		C-g1 (digital console)	
ÜBERWERK			
Principal	4		
Gedackt	8	Action	
Violdigamba	8	Key action: mechanical (attached	
Unda maris	8	console)/digital (remote console)	
Rohrflött	4	Stop action: electrical with sequencers	
Nasat	3	on both consoles	
Octav	2		
Waldflött	2	Pitch A = 415.3 at 20 degrees Celsius	
Tertia	1 ³ / ₅	(transposable at digital console)	
Quinta	1 ¹ / ₂		
Süfflöt	1	Temperament Ortgies II: four 1/5	
Scharff	IV	comma fifths, two 1/10 comma fifths	
Vox Humana	8		
Schwebung		Wind system Four wedge bellows (9ft x 5ft)	
PEDAL			
Principal	16	Wind pressure 63mm	
Subbas	16		



◀ under pressure when the organ is played from the digital console. Using the consoles simultaneously is impossible; the keys on the mechanical console are depressed while the organ is in digital mode, causing all the pipes in any stop drawn there to speak simultaneously. The spring-chests' pallets are mounted on removable drawers as found, for example, in the Huß/Schnitger organ in St Cosmae, Stade, which simplifies maintenance.

Satisfied that the use of spring-chests in itself would not have a negative influence on a sound conceived entirely on slider-chests, the requirement for a magnet to open the secondary pallets led to much investigation to determine whether these would interrupt air-flow when the organ was played from the mechanical console. A test organ was constructed with three channels for each key: one with the dimensions of the Stade channels; a second of identical size but with magnets inserted; and a third, larger channel compensating for the volume of the magnet. A blind listening test was organised, the results of which were contradictory, perhaps reflecting the experts' expectations that sound-polluting elements would be discernible. As a result, the magnets, each with its own microprocessor, are mounted outside the channels



in order to avoid 'judgements around the sound of the new organ [being saddled] with the baggage of a discourse around the construction of the wind-chests; a discourse which would very likely come at the cost of the attention paid to the sound of the instrument.' Sinua were tasked with creating a new, small, magnet, similar in form to a hollowed-out AA battery with a sticker inserted into the void. As the mechanical console has an electric stop action (due to the presence of a sequencer), these stickers open the (stop) pallets in a manner akin to the traditional spring-chest.

While the key action at the mechanical console achieves that rarest of feats, seeming to eliminate the middle man in transferring the minutest of articulation nuances into sound, the second portal into the organ's tonal resources offers a completely different experience in pursuit of very different ends. The uncoupling of pipes from stops, and stops from divisions, implies a new way of registering, in 'layers' controlled via touch screens with the purpose of creating 'new' stops by combining pipes from different sources at different pitches on any or all keys or pedals. In addition, the sounds of the baroque organ can be combined with those of the Sauer. But even this is just the tip of the iceberg. One function allows certain 'layers' to become active only when a key is struck at a certain velocity. One of the expression pedals controls the speed of the baroque organ's blower. A further Sinua innovation renders the speed and extent of the pallet's opening velocity-sensitive from the digital console (cue discussions about touch sensitivity in mechanical versus non-mechanical actions). There are sostenuto devices and a loop station, as used by electric guitarists, as well as MIDI and OSC connections allowing the organ to be played via laptops, tablets, microphones – or even a Nintendo Wii...

Anyone's reaction to the Orgelpark's undeniable ingenuity and creativity will depend on their point of view. The underlying notion that the discovery of new organ sounds lies in new methods of accessing historic ones, rather than, for example, experimental pipe-forms is more than logical. That the limitless soundworlds opened by Sinua's technology are rendered all the more impressive by the quality of the base material is beyond doubt. Nevertheless, two significant questions remain. First, are there not plentiful recent examples of worthwhile new music being written for old organs anyway? And second, is there not a risk that the technology simply propagates a body of site-specific music whose chance of a life beyond the Gerard Brandtstraat is, to say the least, limited? 'The music composed for this organ can now also be performed in Malmö,' comments Hans Fidom. Well, quite. Even the most miserly cynic would

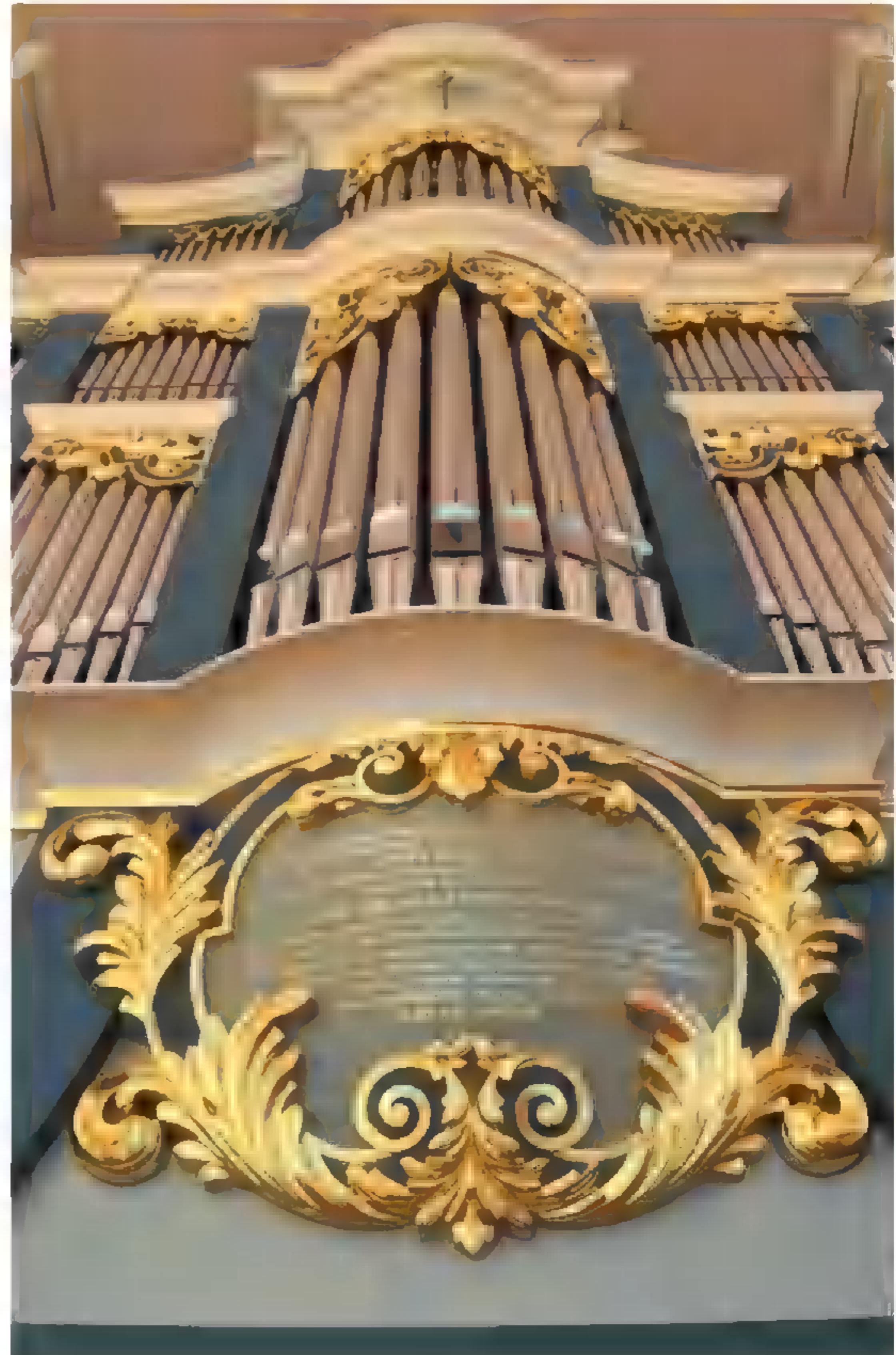
nonetheless have to acknowledge that the Orgelpark's investment in its world-class inventory has fuelled an environment in which engagement with the organ at the highest level, by music-makers of all creeds, has become a reality for the first time. If you haven't made the pilgrimage yet, you know what to do. ■

This article draws on technical information published in Orgelpark Research Report no 5/2, edited by Hans Fidom and available from www.orgelpark.nl.

Chris Bragg studied organ at the former RSAMD, and the Conservatories of Amsterdam and Utrecht. He is head of programming at the University of St Andrews Music Centre and artistic director of St Andrews Organ Week as well as a freelance organist, teacher, writer and translator.

◀ (clockwise, from top left) The revised digital console. The stops for the Utopa Baroque Organ are located below the music desk; the Unda Maris with its double mouths and separated pipe body is based on the description from Adlung's *Musica Mechanica Organoedi* (1768); a removable 'tone-drawer' from the Hauptwerk spring-chest. Clearly visible are the individual, secondary pallets on the underside, and the magnets mounted on top

▶ The magnificent case is topped by a cymbelstern with a unique composition, devised by Ibo Ortgies, and including the BACH motif



CHRIS BRAGG

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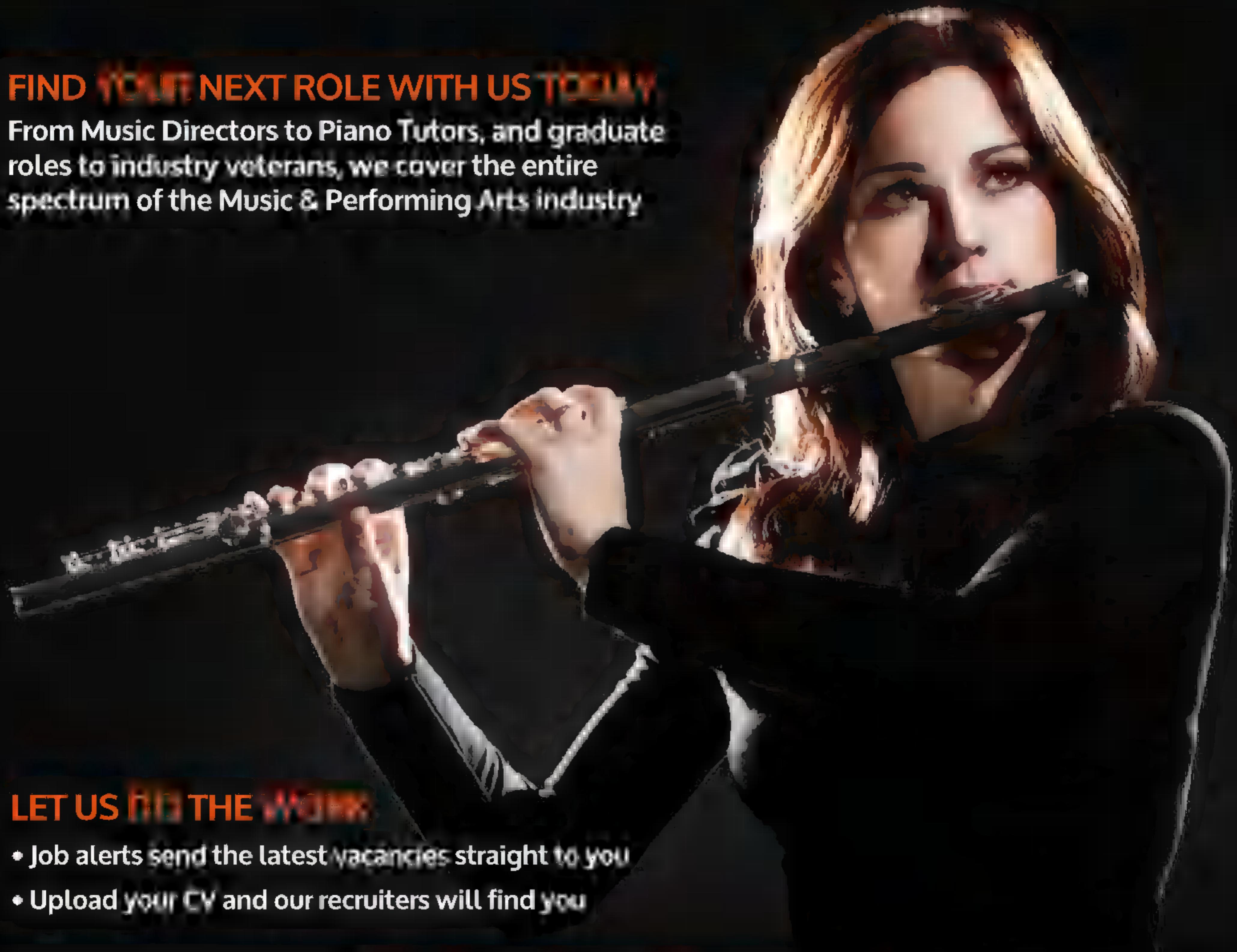
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Against the odds

Rebecca Tavener relates how a 17th-century illegitimate girl defied expectation to become a highly regarded composer

BERTRAND MULIEN

▲ **Cappella Mediterranea**, whose recording of Barbara Strozzi's music took top place in a BBC Radio 3 *Building a Library* programme

We may think that we still have a long way to go to achieve parity between the genders, but just look back and ponder how difficult it was for women to become accepted as composers in days of yore. You could become a nun like the Byzantine Kassia and the medieval St Hildegard of Bingen or, in the 16th and 17th centuries, Isabella Leonarda, Chiara Margarita Cozzolani, Antonia Bembo, and Lucrezia Orsina Vizzana, to name four that are worthily enjoying a recent revival of interest – and don't dismiss them as pale imitations of their masculine contemporaries, some were innovators: Leonarda, for example, is a significant figure in the development of the trio sonata. You might have the good fortune to be born into a leading family and grow into a wealthy and

powerful noblewoman like Isabella d'Este or, at the other end of the social scale, be unwanted, given in secret to an orphanage where music was taught as a route out of humble beginnings such as La Pietà in Venice, delivered via the special 'door' and received by nuns. There, trained to play and sing, you might wait, perhaps all your life in vain, for a husband or employer, trotted out for the entertainment of the wealthy cognoscenti. What if, however, you were the precociously talented, treasured and beloved child of a union unblessed by marriage in the Venice of the 1600s – what then?

Barbara Strozzi, illegitimate daughter of Giulio Strozzi (a member of Venice's intellectual elite) and his servant Isabella Garzoni, was born in 1619 and baptised in the Church of Santa Sofia in the Venetian sestiere

of Cannaregio. Her father referred to Barbara as his 'elettiva' (chosen) daughter with no apparent embarrassment. Illegitimacy carried a heavy social stigma that was nonetheless not insurmountable in the Venice of this period, and the higher the status of the father, the more likelihood of the child's acceptance into society. Male bastards could not hold public office but occasionally petitioned for and received full citizenship from the Doge. Things were always more difficult for women, of course. Nevertheless, Giulio lavished a fine education on his daughter, including music lessons from Francesco Cavalli, and she became one of the most successful women composers of her age and the most prolific composer of either gender of printed secular vocal music in Venice in the middle of the 17th century. Seven publications (including ▶



◀ one of sacred music) appeared between 1644 and 1664.

A brief survey of her works includes one volume of madrigals for two to five voices on texts by her father (1644). All the rest were published after his death, and there was also a break of seven years in publication, probably due to the demands of motherhood. Volume five is of solo motets, *Sacri musicali affetti* (1655), on the theme of Christian *caritas*, celebrating the Church as a benevolent mother; but all the rest are secular ariettas, arias and cantatas largely for solo voice (mostly soprano – herself, of course) and continuo, with some calling for a larger ensemble of strings and another voice or voices. Her style reflects her grounding in the *seconda prattica* tradition, but she goes further than her teacher Cavalli, with melismatic passages and repetition of text. It is tempting to state that Strozzi's music more than implies the potential for a greater operatic talent than Cavalli's, if only she had had the chance to write for the stage. Her harmony could be adventurous: a fine example is *L'eracrito amoroso*, a chaconne with variations on a harmonic progression. She produced music of exquisite elegance and grace, variety and invention, charm, energy and wit, deep emotion and even extreme drama (take *Il Lamento* for solo soprano, for example) and, while her music is understandably soprano-centric, some of her most engaging works are those for two female voices and bass, such as *Desideri vani*, a cantata from her third book.

Strozzi dedicated her volumes of music to important people, mostly foreign to Venice, including the Grand Duchess of Tuscany, Vittoria della Rovere, and the Archduchess of Austria, Anna de Medici. Other dedicatees, all men, include a book of songs, now lost, to Carlo II, Duke of Mantua, a bit of a rake who was known to visit Venice and partake of all its charms, from the opera to the courtesans. Strozzi's confidence in addressing the 'great and good' of the time stemmed from her fame within the artistic salon for poets and musicians, Accademia degli Unisoni ('Academy of the Like-Minded'),

► The Chiesa di Santa Sofia, in the Cannaregio district of Venice, where Strozzi was baptised

■ Bernard Strozzi's painting 'The Viola da Gamba Player' c.1630s, thought to be a portrait of Barbara Strozzi



founded by her father in 1637. Barbara was hostess, singing and suggesting topics of conversation.

Several members dedicated their own works to her and the Genoese writer Gian Vincenzo, having heard her sing, described her as 'one of the muses of Parnassus'. A satire of the Unisoni (from a jealous member of a rival artistic circle) suggested that she was a courtesan. Is this a calumny?

She never sings if I don't 'count'
Nor does her voice find the pitch,
Nor does she have the quill ready to play
If she doesn't hear the sound of gold.
She is always teaching me
That's if I want to sing a duet,
Before she'll sing the 'fa'
I'd better give her the 'dough'.

Some have used her portrait by Bernard Strozzi (no relation) to support or deny this claim. A semi-nude in dishabille with a viola da gamba, its shape echoing female curves, implies easy morals to some, but it has also been suggested that there is nothing louche about it and that her bared breast symbolised

The Genoese writer Gian Vincenzo heard Strozzi sing, and called her 'one of the muses of Parnassus'

her motherhood. The high-class courtesans in Venice were famous throughout Europe, celebrated for their wit, education, sophistication and beauty. If Barbara was among them, she was not a humble *cortigiana di lume*, but a *cortigiana onesta*, the superior courtesan; but did she really sell herself to men? She was unmarried yet had four children, probably evidence of a long and steady relationship with a married friend of her father, Giovanni Paolo Vidman (who died in 1648). He seems to have fathered at least three of them and there is every possibility that it was an exclusive relationship while it lasted. Was it rape at the outset? The Venetian authorities considered rape to be a minor crime in the period (unless incest or extreme injury were involved), and it was sometimes considered a prelude to marriage between the parties. Vidman, however, was already a married man – indeed, his in-laws helped at least one of his children by Barbara to find a place in holy orders. It is a mystery, and

perhaps Barbara and her father put the rape rumour about to protect her reputation. She would leave home for her confinements and have the children baptised elsewhere to avoid gossip in her own parish. Three (two girls and a boy) entered holy orders. The remaining son, Giulio Pietro, remained secular and was still alive in 1680.

Strozzi's financial activities are revealing, including government investments (already evident at the age of 20), and she was able to lend someone 2,000 ducats in 1642. Her finances clearly fluctuated, however, because, even though she was his heir, she seems not to have inherited much in the way of fiscal security from Giulio. She sought exemption from paying a tax levied to fund an expensive conflict, writing to the Doge with, perhaps, a certain hyperbole:

I am persuaded that if the Most Excellent Tax Assessors had reflected with justice that I have four children in addition to my aged mother, and on my miserable fortunes, this harassment never would have occurred ... I implore Your Excellency not to permit the destruction of a household unable to pay.

After 1664 no more is known of her until her death at the age of 58 is registered in Padua in 1677, and she is believed to be buried there in the Church of the Eremitani. Did the muse desert her, or is the music of this period lost? Did her children fail to preserve her artistic legacy? She was, beyond doubt, a complex woman of undeniable intellect, strength of character and purpose, commanding respect and honour, business-minded as well as creative, and an outstanding musical talent. So, before we get all 'Carry on Composing' about the life of a superior courtesan in Venice, let's compare Strozzi's (probable) love life to that of the average young woman today – whom might we find the more constant, moral, and admirable? ■

Rebecca Tavener is a singer and director specialising in early and contemporary music. She is founder-director of Canty, Scotland's only professional medieval music group.

Recordings

There are few currently available in CD format. The disc by Cappella Mediterranea that was the top choice in an edition of BBC Radio 3's *Building a Library* in 2016 is now available solely as downloads.

There are some very fine performances on YouTube from Cappella Mediterranea, featuring the extraordinary soprano of Mariana Flores, and also live performances from Phillip Jaroussky with L'Arpeggiata, directed by Christina Pluhar. La Venexiana may be found performing *Volano frettolosi*, one of the 5-part madrigals from Strozzi's 1644 publication.

Editions

Barbara Strozzi: Cantate, ariete ■ una, due e tre voci, op.3
Gail Archer (ed.)
A-R Editions B083

Barbara Strozzi: Complete edition in various volumes
Richard Kolb (ed.)
Cor Donato Editions

A collection of solo soprano and continuo works is also available, gratis, from a variety of editors.
Choral Public Domain Library (CPDL)

▼ The Chiesa degli Eremitani in Padua, where Strozzi is thought to be buried



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Organs for all

Sweden's 'City of Organs' has commissioned a new Rieger symphonic instrument – and an outreach programme is making sure that it is no secret. **Anne Page** reports

Over the past quarter-century, Gothenburg has established itself as Sweden's 'City of Organs', home to a superlative collection of instruments with distinctive identities for almost every significant repertoire. The annual festival in October showcases an international faculty of performers, researchers and instrument builders. The city now has an ambitious plan to build one of the largest organs in the Nordic countries and put itself on the world map of organ centres with a new organ for Gothenburg's Concert Hall. The project brings together the Göteborg International Organ Academy (GIOA), the Concert Hall management company, HIGAB, and the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, Sweden's national orchestra. The project uses a collaborative model more usually found in the sciences than in the organ world, a model

pioneered with the building of the North German Research Organ in Gothenburg's Örgryte New Church. This time the model has been applied at the planning and commissioning stage, with a reference group of eight internationally recognised experts coming together to advise on and refine the concept, and to select an organ builder with the necessary experience to carry it out. Hans Davidsson, artistic director of GIOA, hopes that this will inspire and generate new directions for the next 30-40 years of building concert hall organs.

The project began in 2016 when Davidsson (representing GIOA) was asked by HIGAB to determine whether the existing organ, built by Marcussen & Sons in 1937 but unplayable since 2000, could be brought back into use. It was finally decided that while the Marcussen organ could be restored, it would not fulfil

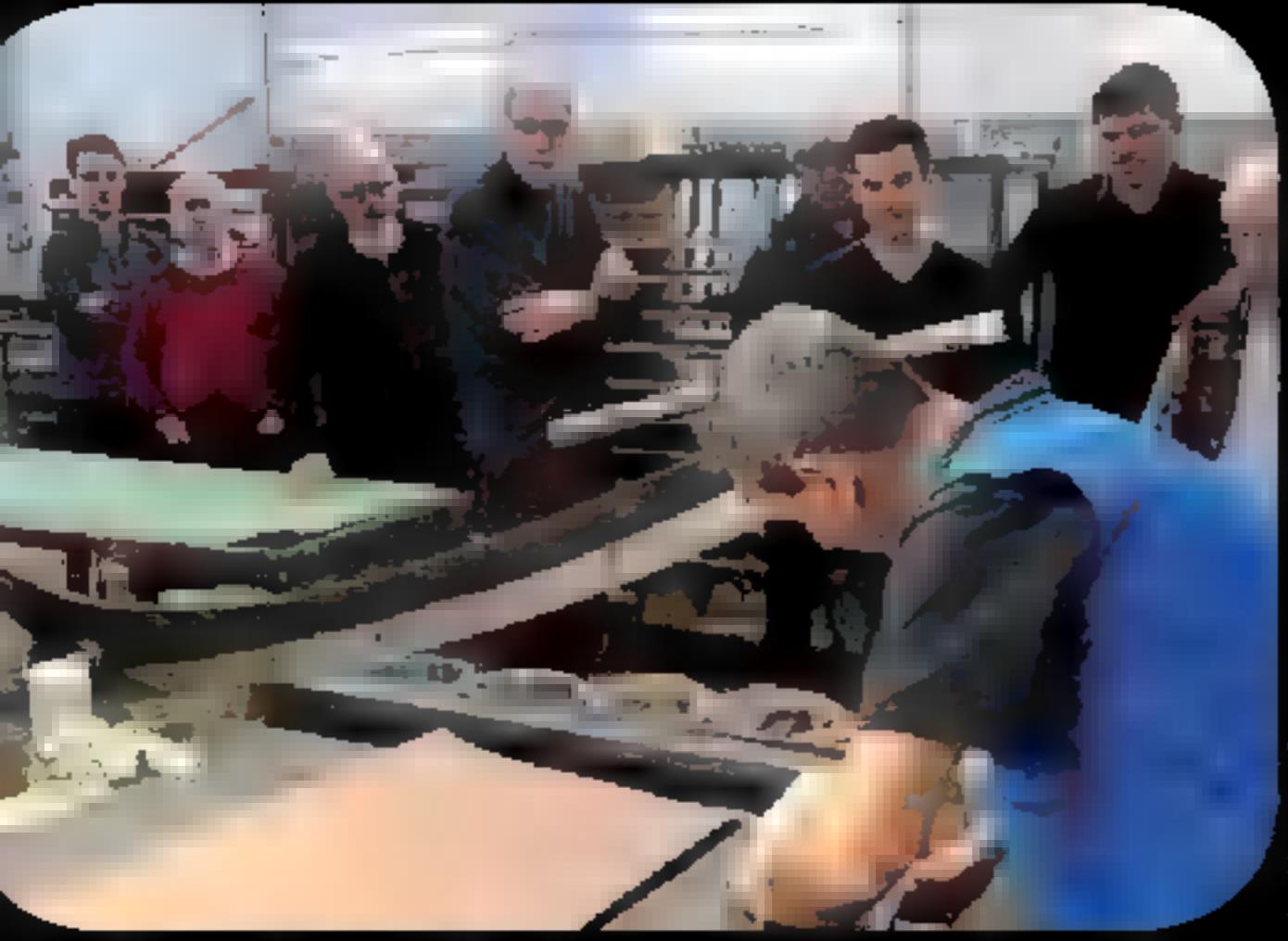
the requirement for an instrument perfectly adapted to the acoustics of the space and equipped to work alongside Gothenburg's world-class orchestra. It was decided to commission a new organ, tailor-made for the hall and of the highest possible standard. The reference group convened to establish the details of the commission, and will work in a supporting role with the organ builder, in the words of Davidsson, 'to ensure the highest possible artistic result.' The group includes Bine Bryndorf, Hans-Ola Ericsson, Nathan Laube, Koos van de Linde, Karin Nelson, Paul Peeters, Joris Verdin and Magnus Kjellson (representative of the symphony orchestra).

The concept of a French symphonic instrument combining tradition with innovation was discussed with six firms suitably experienced for the job, and the final, unanimous decision was for Rieger

■ The Orgelkids project involves children building an organ from a 'flat-pack' kit



© 2019 AVRO/NEDERLANDSE ORGELKIDS NV



▲ (this page and opposite) The many stages of the new organ project include project meetings at Rieger Orgelbau in Austria and in Paris ...

◀ Orgelbau of Schwarzach, Austria. Among the organs visited by the reference group were Rieger's instrument in the Philharmonie de Paris (2015) and Messiaen's organ in La Trinité (originally Cavaillé-Coll, 1869). The resulting specification is close to that of the Philharmonie in size, but has some innovative features which will allow unexpected new sound combinations. The basis of the organ acknowledges the French tradition described by Dom Bedos, with a rich array of mutation stops from the Grosse Quinte $5\frac{1}{3}$ and Grosse Tierce $3\frac{1}{5}$ on the Grand Orgue now continued through to the Septième $1\frac{1}{7}$, Neuvième $\frac{8}{9}$ and Onzième $\frac{8}{11}$ on the Positif Expressif. A veritable battalion of high-pressure reeds is to be expected on such a large instrument and is indeed a feature, but the presence of free reed stops at 16ft and 8ft pitch, evocative of the harmonium, link the organ to the soundworld of the 19th century. These are found on the Orchestre Expressif, the fourth manual, which offers a range of orchestral colour: strings at 16ft, 8ft and 4ft and a three-rank Harmonia aetheria; and five 8ft stops that give a palette of contrasted delicate timbres – Flûte d'orchestre, Bourdon doux, Quintaton, Éolienne, Voix angélique.

There are two consoles, one free-standing and moveable, and an attached mechanical

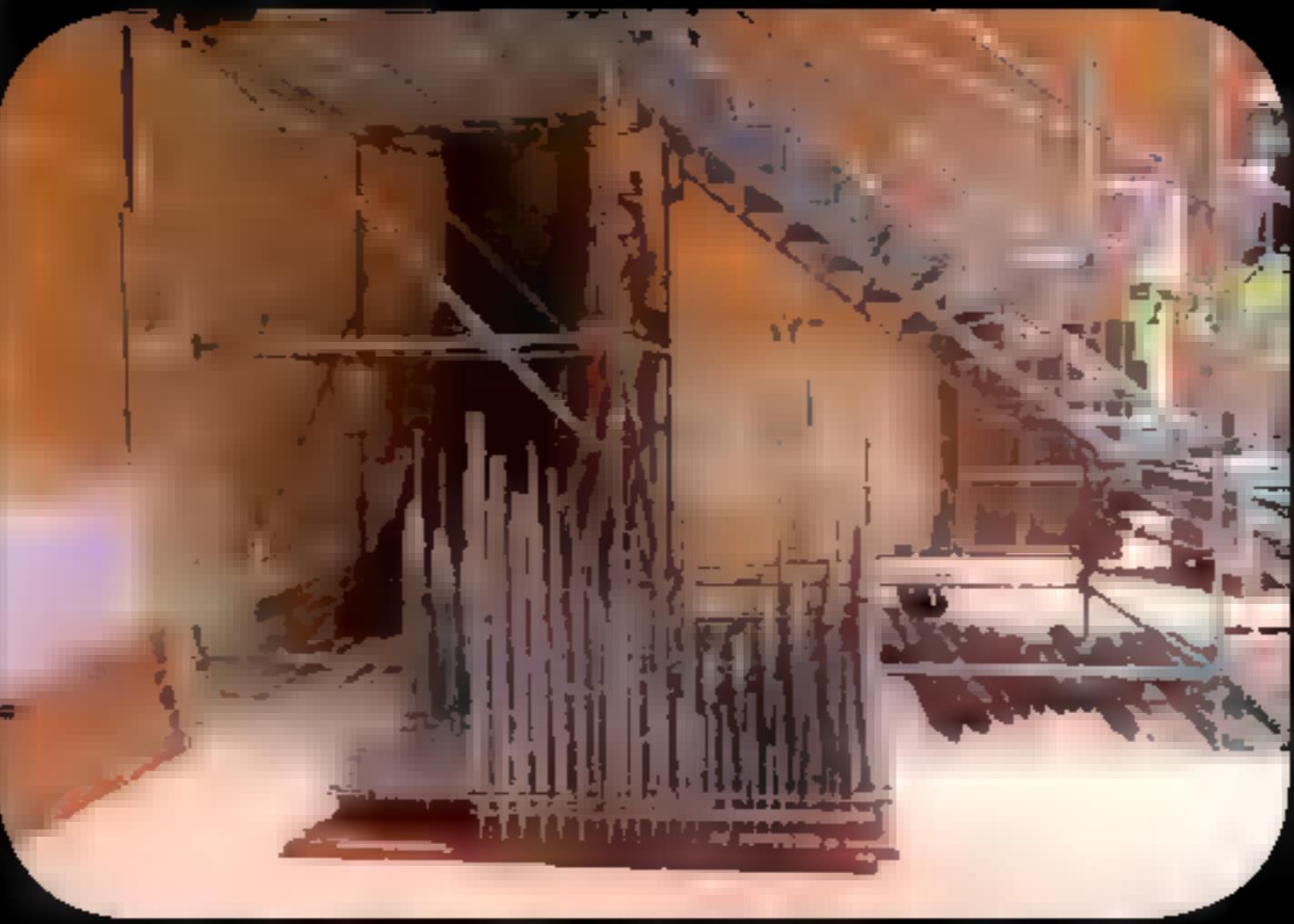
console which can move vertically, probably the first in organ building history. With 112 stops, including 15 transmissions, and building adjustments (podium, podium wall and canopy), the price tag for the whole project is around 3.5 million euros. In 2018, the Hall's 1930s organ was carefully dismantled and stored as a valuable cultural artefact, with the possibility of a future existence elsewhere. The new organ began installation in summer 2019 and is scheduled for completion in 2021, the 400th anniversary of the foundation of the city.

The GIOA team is keen to engage Gothenburg's citizens with this enterprise and has an active programme of events designed to increase their involvement with the organ and its music. In close cooperation with the Swedish church and city parishes in Gothenburg, 'Organ for Everyone' aims to bring organ music into everyday life. The West Sweden Organ Vision is a project managed by GIOA in collaboration with partners in Västra Götaland, the wider region around Gothenburg and the second largest county in Sweden. A three-year grant for cultural strategic development is funding concerts and events raising interest in the organ across the region. GIOA's Jon Liinason has extensive experience

of bringing the arts into public life and working with organisations to create innovative projects. Together with Lars Storm, organist and director of the organ festival, he is responsible for creating a new communication platform geared towards reaching out, not only to the professional scene of organists and organ researchers, but also to a much broader audience of all ages. One of the initiatives to find new audiences for organ events is called 'Go Bach to Sleep', in which the focus is the effect of the music on the individual listener rather than on the performance. The traditional performer/audience model is blurred in favour of a shared experience of the music. Musicians present a programme of music, mainly by Bach, on the organ and other keyboard instruments while the audience is encouraged to lie down, relax and even sleep, with the aid of blankets, pillows and socks which are provided. A sequence of phrases spoken by the performer introduces the three short musical presentations and encourages a meditative atmosphere. Another creative use of the holistic approach to listening is the 'Organ Music Massage' (the brainchild of Örgryte New Church organist Erland Hildén) in which audience members are offered a shoulder and neck massage

... the arrival and installation of the new Rieger organ ...





... dismantling and removing the Marcussen organ from the Concert Hall in Gothenburg ...

by professional therapists as they listen to organ music – a doubly ‘endorphin-rich’ experience!

GIOA's comprehensive vision of organ culture naturally needs a programme specially designed for children, and this is provided by the Orgelkids project. Orgelkids began in the Netherlands and now has branches in Belgium, the USA, Canada and Sweden, with Germany and the UK soon to join. A miniature working model of an organ with

website contains lesson plans and suggestions for use by different age groups and videos of the Do-organ being assembled and used.

The Orgelkids programme was introduced in Sweden at the Göteborg Youth Organ Festival in 2018. Since then some 750 children have taken part in workshops totalling hundreds of hours. As with other educational programmes designed for children (one thinks of the WOOFYT, which has been making a similar contribution in this

into contact with the workshops. In later Orgelkids workshops during the International Science Festival Gothenburg in April 2019, a whole class of 15-year-olds was treated to a post-organ building workshop, where they were invited to tread the 12 bellows of the North German Baroque Organ at Örgryte New Church, and were flabbergasted by the concept of being inside a completely acoustic mechanical musical marvel, such as this instrument, and actually being critically responsible for producing the fundamentals for organ sound: wind pressure.'

GIOA has developed a model which brings organ culture to the heart of its home city in a way which, while being thoroughly international in outlook, is also unique to its place. The instruments already built and being planned are part of a wide-ranging vision which is as inspiring as it is ambitious. ■

The full specification of the new organ is on the GIOA website: bit.ly/2mfjdC4.

Thanks to Hans Davidsson and Jon Liinason of GIOA for their help.

Anne Page is an international organ recitalist, founding trustee of the Cambridge Academy of Organ Studies, and professor of harmonium at the Royal Academy of Music.

'Go Bach to Sleep' presents music while encouraging the audience to lie down and relax

two octaves and two stops – all made of wood – has been developed by Dutch organ builder Wim Janssen. When assembled it is the size of a portative organ which can sit on a tabletop. All the parts are 'flat-packed' in a case measuring 80cm by 40cm by 40cm, which will fit into a car. The numbered components are designed to be assembled without tools, and step-by-step instructions are provided. It takes a small team of children under an hour to sort and assemble the parts of this 'Do-organ' which can then be hand-pumped and played. The kit can be rented and is of course suitable for older age groups as well. The Orgelkids

country for many years), the learning takes place on many levels: collaboration, teamwork, technical and mechanical discovery, mathematics and the physics of sound, as well as musical skills. The Do-organ also leads to investigating the larger instrument with a real understanding of how it works and, not surprisingly, it appeals to every age group. Jon Liinason comments: 'What surprised the festival crew maybe the most during the initial try-outs at the Göteborg Youth Festival was how well the Orgelkids pedagogy engaged not only kids, but also their parents, their grandparents and all sorts of adults who came

... and when all is completed, as part of the Organ for Everyone project, Hanna Drakengren and Karin Sigge Dahlqvist perform an organ story for children





Freshening up

Solomon's Knot may have come from small beginnings, but the group's innovative techniques continue to evolve. Jonathan Sells talks to **Clare Stevens** about the inspiration behind the group, and its distinctive approach to early music performance

We're not a choir,' Jonathan Sells, artistic director of Solomon's Knot, declared emphatically at the start of a recent radio interview previewing the ensemble's debut at the BBC Proms. Solomon's Knot calls itself a collective, which in practice means it is a group of experienced professional musicians who come together for a few days of intense rehearsals before performances that are characterised by an unusually close collaboration between singers and players. Taking their bows after that late-night Prom – a programme of four cantatas by J.S. Bach celebrating the Feast of St Michael – the instrumentalists left their seats and all the performers stood in a single long line across the front of the stage, emphasising their shared responsibility for the performance they had just given.

An intake of breath was audible around the vast spaces of the Royal Albert Hall, as audience members realised that the singers were performing the whole concert from memory, as they usually do. They also perform without a conductor. The role of violinist James Toll, leader of the orchestra, was important in the Prom, but not particularly conspicuous; the eight singers supported and encouraged one another in arias (equally shared as far as possible) and ensembles, and only occasional nods or penetrating looks indicated that bass Sells is the linchpin of the group.

Originally a double bass player, Sells was discouraged from ambitions to be a conductor by the awe-inspiring quality of his Cambridge generation, which included people like Robin Ticciati, Nicholas Collon and Geoffrey Paterson. Instead, he focused on singing, going on to study at the Guildhall in London and the International Opera Studio in Zurich. He also performed with ensembles such as the Monteverdi Choir, I Fagiolini, the Dunedin Consort, and as a member of William Christie's 'Le Jardin des Voix' (featured in C&O March/April 2019), as well as in opera and lieder.

He traces the origin of Solomon's Knot to an English-language performance of Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* with an amateur choir when he was a student. Between solos, he found himself reflecting on the uninspiring nature of the experience. 'Looking round at the audience, my

fellow soloists, the choir and the orchestra, it struck me that nobody was really getting anything out of it. There was no excitement about the music or the event. I felt there must be another way of doing things that would be more engaging and inspiring.'

From this seed grew a plan to perform an oratorio and make it as good as possible, not just another of the routine concerts that fill every freelance musician's diary. 'We began with *Messiah*, which I put together on a shoestring in March 2008 at St James's Church, Piccadilly, in London, with a relatively small ensemble, which I called the Solomon Choir and Orchestra. The aim was to focus on the message of the piece and make it seem fresh, and for everybody to be there because they really wanted to be.'

'At that stage I did conduct and the singers used scores. It seemed to work, so we formally launched the ensemble and my good friend Julian Forbes came on board to help run it. The following year we performed Handel's *Solomon*, which had always been my ambition ... hence the name. That was enormous fun. But the collective has evolved very gradually, as a result of a series of decisions that we've taken over the years. I didn't know it would become what it is today.'

A key moment in this evolution was a self-promoted concert of music by Buxtehude and other north German composers in Aldeburgh Parish Church in 2010. 'Because the ensemble was so small, it felt as though it would be more effective and more fun if I sang as a member of the consort and didn't conduct; we enjoyed it so much that we wondered if we could adopt that chamber music approach to *Messiah*. We tried it at St John's Smith Square and found that it worked very well, but the music seemed to be in the way. If we didn't have a conductor we needed more visual contact with one another. So the next step was to dispense with our scores.'

At around the same time Sells moved to Bern, Switzerland, to spend much of the year working as an opera singer, and the musicologist-conductor James Halliday joined the collective as joint artistic director. Halliday's particular interest is French and

► 'Not a choir'; the collective Solomon's Knot focuses on what will create the best musical experience for the audience



▲ Solomon's Knot perform
■ 'extraordinary' *St John
Passion* as part of the
Leipzig Bach Festival

△ Italian baroque music; he has worked as an assistant conductor or researcher for conductors such as John Eliot Gardiner, Emmanuelle Haïm and Christophe Rousset, conducted staged productions of operas by Rameau and Monteverdi, and worked with baroque and Arabic traditional musicians in Syria. He has created musical editions for the Berlin Philharmonic and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and has led education workshops on baroque music. He also has a passion for contemporary music, having studied composition with Robin Holloway and Michael Finnissy.

'James and I usually have our own discrete projects with Solomon's Knot,' says Sells, 'although we bounce ideas off one another, and I consult James a lot on programmes involving 17th-century music or earlier.'

However, they are also open to ideas from other members of the ensemble. 'This is in contrast to most musical groups, which operate a traditional top-down structure with a single artistic director determining programming and identity. Our collective works in the round. The inspiration for a project may come from

any one of us, and artistic leadership in concert isn't fixed either. Operationally, this helps us to overcome our widespread geographical base – from east London to Bern – and artistically it ensures that the group's definition emerges through collaboration and teamwork.'

Hunting for a logo for the reformed collective with its emphasis on valuing contributions from all the performers, they discovered Solomon's famous knot, which they thought provided a neat representation of the bond between choir and orchestra.

'Our players work very hard on the "text" of their individual lines, and the singers on communicating as if they are part of a string quartet. Together we work on a unity of articulation and expression, matching colour, and of course on the interdependence without which performances such as our chamber *Messiah* simply would not be possible. Solomon's Knot is actually nothing of the kind, but rather two interweaving loops, inextricably linked, which perfectly reflected our new structure, so we tied everything together and adopted it as our name.'

As inaugural members of Aldeburgh Music's Open Space residency scheme 2013-2017, Solomon's Knot had the chance to develop their artistic vision and their collaborations with great freedom. 'Every concert we try to tweak things ... with the singers placed in front of or behind the orchestra, sometimes working with a stage director ... but always focused on the audience, and what is going to create the best experience for them. Communicating the text effectively to the audience has always been my main goal.'

'We can be as free as we like without scores, but I would never want it to be a circus trick – it's a means to an end, which is interpreting the music'

The success of this approach was obvious at a Coffee Concert in St Lawrence's Church, York, given as part of the collective's Ryedale Festival residency this summer. On a wet Saturday morning the group performed five of the great J.S. Bach motets, together with four by his much-respected second cousin Johann Christoph Bach (1642-1703), to a packed audience. Most scarcely glanced at the translations provided in their programmes, so enthralled were they by the singers' passionately committed delivery of the German texts, characterising every single line,

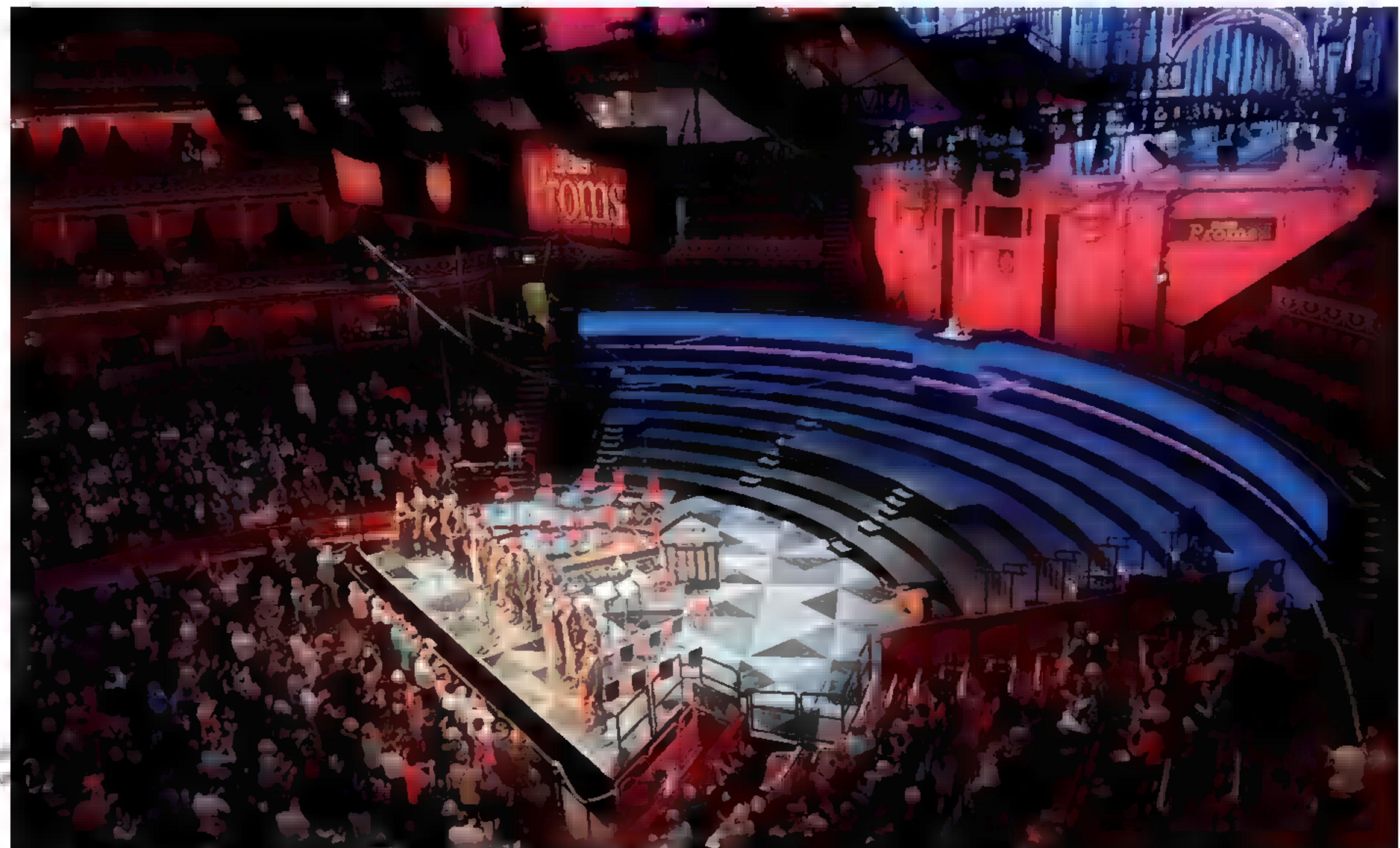
switching voice parts and line-ups from one piece to another, and sometimes moving around the stage during an individual motet.

Their Ryedale residency also included a preview of their Proms Bach programme at Ampleforth Abbey, and an extended sequence of works by Purcell for voices and instruments, with stage direction by Tama Matheson, in Scarborough. Other recent concerts have included an extraordinary Bach *St John Passion* as part of the Leipzig Bach Festival (livestreamed on

Facebook), with the roles of the Evangelist and Christ, as well as the arias, shared between the singers.

Sells is keen to point out that working without a conductor is actually more significant and musically more demanding than performing from memory. 'We can be as free as we like without scores and it brings enormous benefits for us as performers, allowing us to interact with one another and with the instrumentalists. But I would never want it to be a circus trick – it's a means to an end, which is interpreting the music.'

▼ The group take their bows after performing at a late-night Prom



CHARLES HAMILTON

◀ 'I have done big oratorio tours from memory with a conductor, and to be honest, it's not all that different from normal concerts – everything is still channelled by the very powerful person in front of you. Our aspiration is to make music spontaneously together.'

He admits, however, that he prepares new repertoire as a conductor would and arrives for rehearsals with a blueprint for how he thinks everything should go, which he shares with his colleagues. 'Then we tweak it. We start with some sessions with the singers on their own, where we work quite hard in a very choral way before the players join us. If anyone feels strongly that an interpretation should be different, we may change it; for example, I had planned a particular dynamic scheme for the opening of one of the cantatas in our Proms programme, but one of the instrumentalists felt it should go in completely the opposite direction, so we changed it, and that's fine.'

Coming up with different musical or dramatic ideas on stage is also encouraged: 'It helps to make our concerts really special, if sometimes scary. The secret is in everybody committing themselves and paying attention – if one person has lost concentration a particular gesture might *half*-happen, and that's not ideal.'

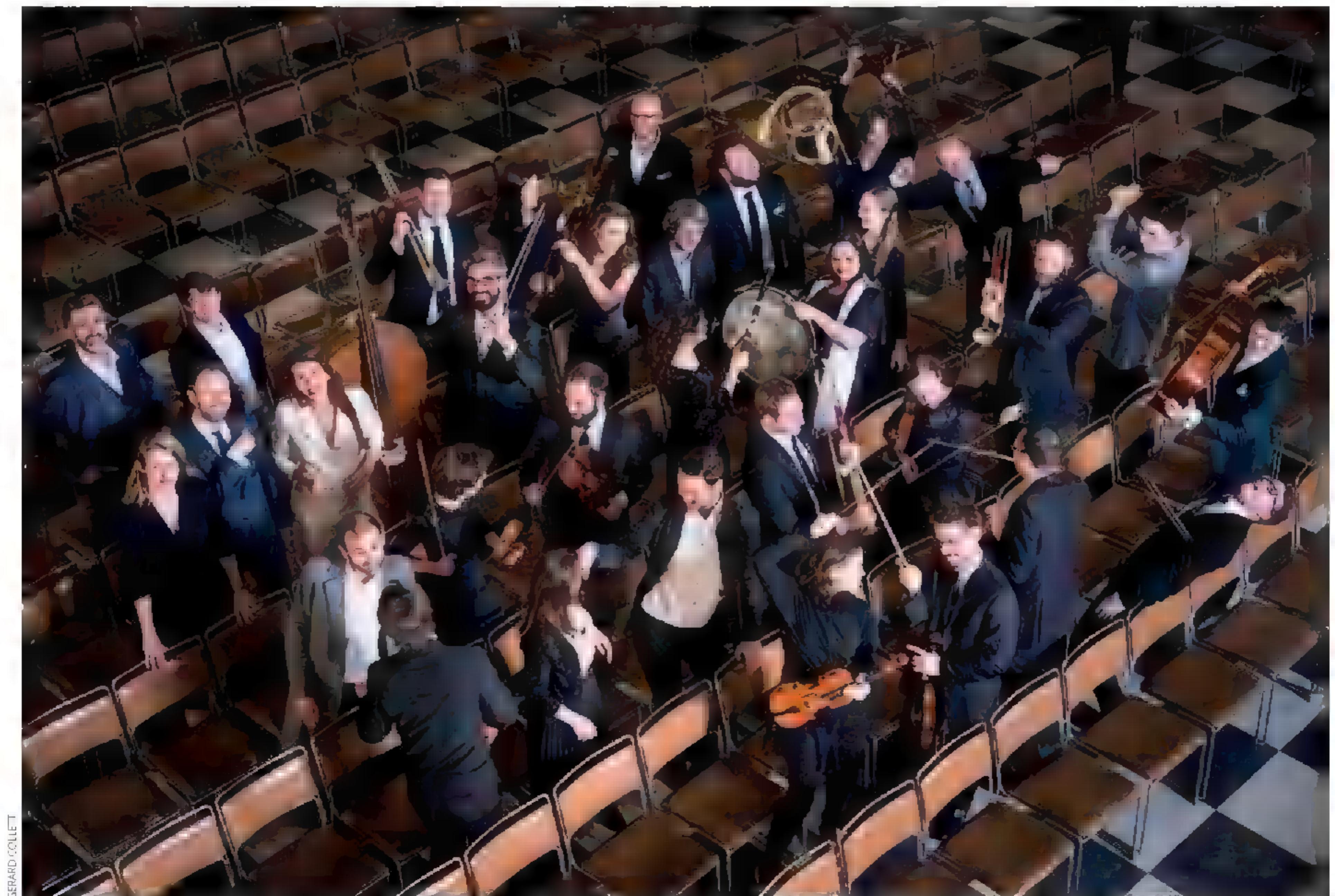
▼ Solomon's Knot brings singers and instrumentalists together to create 'unity of articulation and expression'

The collective's line-up seems to have settled in the past couple of seasons, with a slightly larger pool of musicians than will ever be on stage together. 'I know that for many of them Solomon's Knot is a very special thing, because they write and tell me. Of course I rely on the fact that British musicians have such extraordinary facility that they can just show up and ■ performance will be good, but in order to dig deeper into the music you have to go the extra mile. This is a group of people who are willing to do that because they know they can express themselves.'

'I feel so lucky in having singers in the collective who can stand in the Royal Albert Hall and sing an aria, but can also work as a vocal consort and sing as a choir as beautifully as they all did in the final chorale of our Prom, *Nun ist das Heil und die Kraft*, the fragment that survives of Cantata 50. It's not obvious that eight soloistic voices would be able to do that.' ■

solomonsknotcollective.com

Solomon's Knot will perform Charpentier's Christmas Oratorio at the York Early Music Christmas Festival on Saturday 7 December 2019 at 6.30pm in St Margaret's Church, Walmgate, York YO1 9TL, and in the Christmas Festival at St John's, Smith Square, London on Monday 9 December 2019 at 7.30pm.



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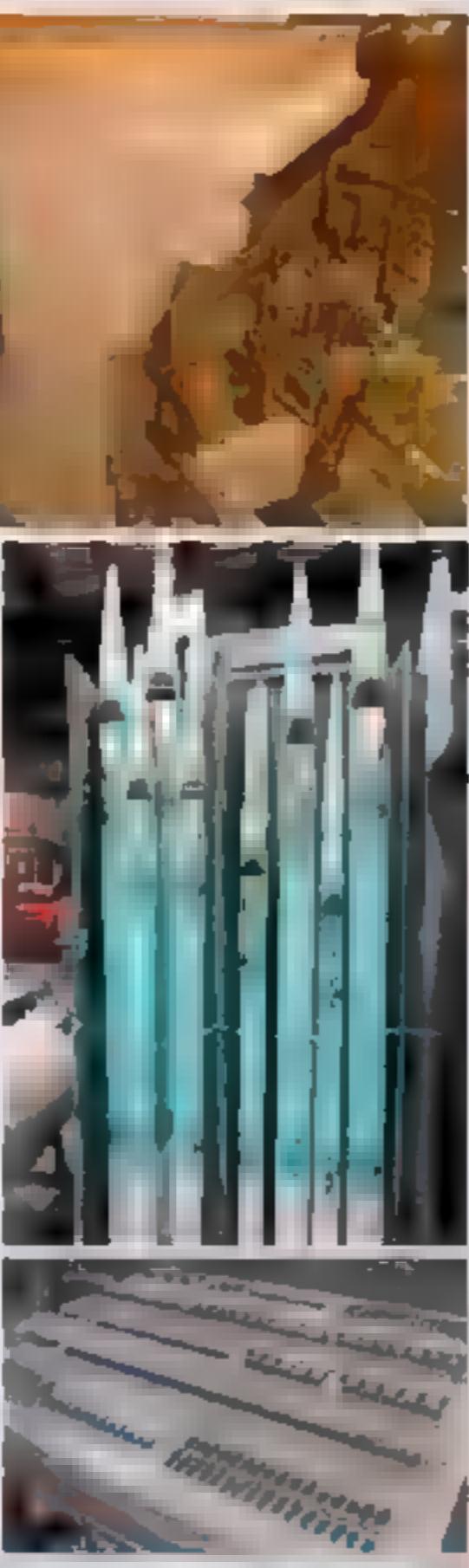
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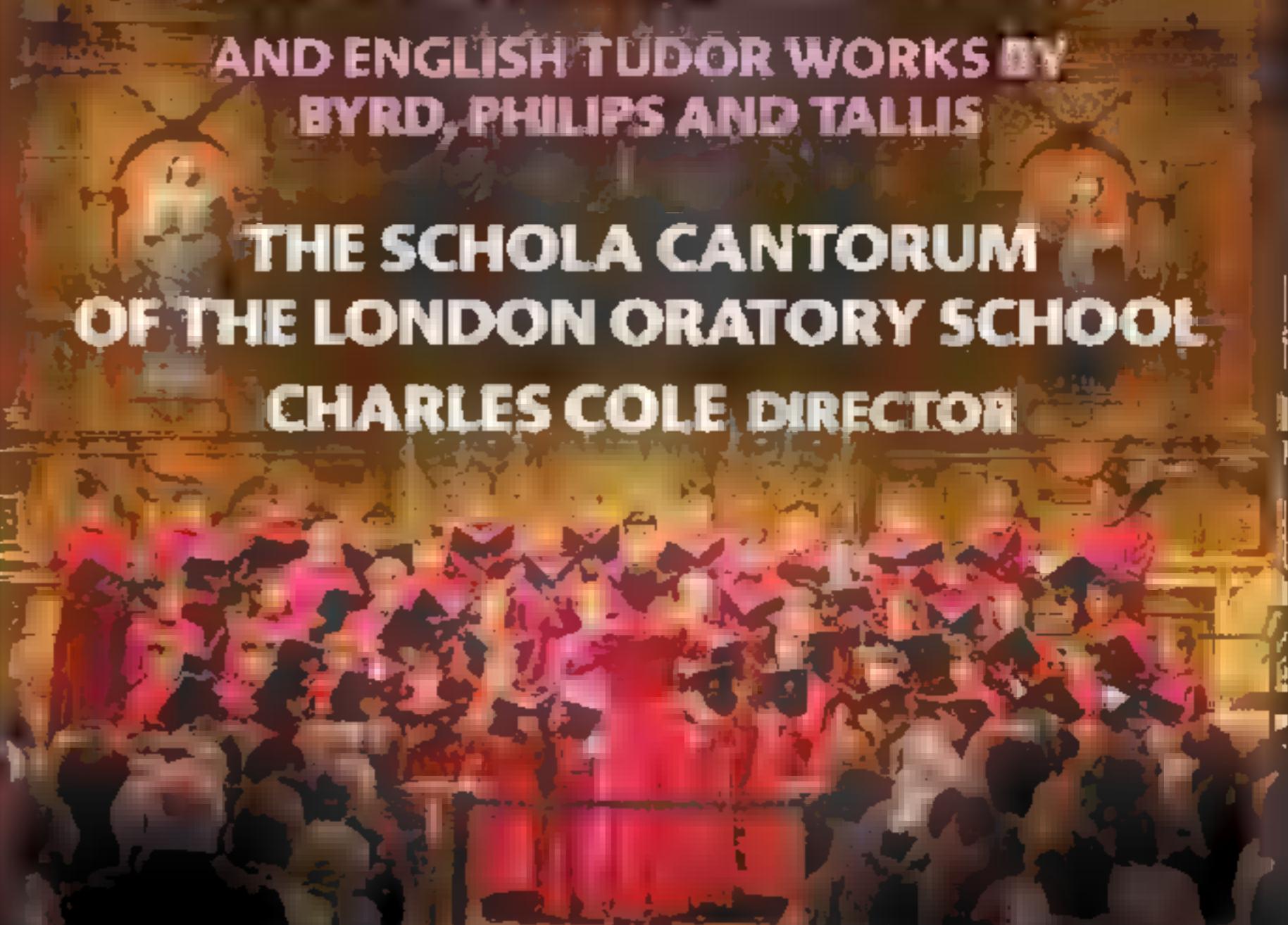
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Iberian inspiration

The enigmatic organ music of the prolific 17th-century Valencian Juan Cabanilles can seem a tough nut to crack. Currently engaged in an ongoing recording of the composer's œuvre, **Timothy Roberts** takes us on a voyage of discovery

Many organists in the English-speaking world are aware of the existence of a large repertoire of keyboard music by Spanish and Portuguese composers of the 16th and 17th centuries. We tend not to play much of this wonderful corpus of music either in services or in concert, which may be for various reasons, including the perceived lack of suitable instruments, and the relative scarcity of editions and of information in English. Perhaps, too, we may see in the music itself a certain severity, at least in the way it looks on the page. Nowadays, though, none of these issues should prevent us performing and enjoying the colourful and often dramatic music of Joan, or Juan, Cabanilles in particular, the extraordinary composer

who in the late 17th century brought the great Spanish organ tradition to its culmination.

Even more than his near contemporary Dieterich Buxtehude, Cabanilles is associated above all with a single great trading port, in his case Valencia at the southern end of the Catalan-speaking area on the peninsula's eastern coast. As one of imperial Spain's great cities, Valencia's Catholicism expressed the Counter-Reformation's confident power, while musically it looked not only inland to Spain but also across the Mediterranean to Italy. Thus in Cabanilles we find a powerful blend of Hispanic intensity with Italianate brilliance and sensuality.

Born in Algemesí near Valencia in 1644, Cabanilles became second organist of Valencia Cathedral as early as 1665 and,

having taken the obligatory minor orders, rose within a year to the post of first organist; in 1668 he was ordained into the priesthood. Incidentally, it was not until 1703 that another second organist was appointed. Cabanilles would stay at the Cathedral for almost half a century, composing indefatigably to become, by his death in 1712, probably the most prolific of all composers for the organ. We know little of a seemingly uneventful personal life, though Spanish priests often became wealthy (some even owned slaves) and his will shows that he had dealt advantageously in property. Recorded absences in later years were probably due to ill health, while 19th-century accounts of his travelling north, even as far as France, are now regarded as unfounded. ▷



▲ Ex. 1: Bars 88-92 of the well-known *Passacalles de primero tono* (*Opera omnia* vol.2, p.43) transcribed from Biblioteca de Catalunya MS 386 p.182, in the original open-score notation with a fifth voice entering ■ the start of Variation 23.

▲ Ex. 2: Transcription on to two staves of the opening of a *tiento lleno de octavo tono* (the complete work is in vol.1 of the Bärenreiter edition) with, in bar one, a left-hand *redoble* starting before the beat, and *quiebros* (main note trills) in bars 4-5; both ornaments should probably be played somewhat freely

Counting singly each of his sometimes substantial *versos*, there are more than a thousand surviving organ works by Cabanilles. None of them was published in his lifetime, nor do any of them survive in his own hand.¹ The most significant sources are two large copyists' manuscripts, one from the 1690s and one dated 1722, in the Biblioteca de Catalunya. Almost inaccessible for many years, these may now be consulted online.² Two other important sources, especially of the *versos*, are in the Fundació Cosme Bauçà at Felanitx in Mallorca. Reflecting the contrapuntal basis of Cabanilles's style, the manuscripts are written in (mostly four-part) open score, the old-fashioned notation also used in, for example, Frescobaldi's *Fiori musicali* and Bach's *Art of Fugue*.

These and other, lesser sources preserve some 180 large-scale, mostly contrapuntal works by Cabanilles that are most usually called *tiento*, or else *partido* ('divided'), *obra* (work), *pedazo de música* (piece of music), or *batalla*.³ A few of them are based on plainsong melodies such as 'Ave maris stella' or 'Pange lingua'. The *tiento* – a word roughly equivalent to 'essay' – was a venerable

Iberian form that had most often, though not always, been in ■ contrapuntal, imitative style comparable to that of the early baroque fantasia, canzona or ricercare. As regards the varied structures of Cabanilles's *tientos*, the Spanish scholar Miguel Bernal Ripoll⁴ identifies six main categories: *tientos llenos*, *lleno* (full) indicating the use of the same registration in each hand; *tientos llenos sin paso* (without theme) that start with chords, sometimes in a dance style, rather than imitation; *tientos partidos*, in which a solo registration in the treble or bass sets one voice, or sometimes two, against (usually) two accompanying voices in the other hand; *tientos de batalla*, with themes based on the arpeggios and repeated notes typical of trumpet music; *tientos de falsas* (dissonances), slow pieces with many expressive harmonies; and *tientos de contras* in which the pedals sustain long notes. Despite their sometimes great length (up to 400 bars), these works are assumed to have been intended primarily for eucharistic and other services at the Cathedral.

Alongside the *tientos* is a group of six introductory *tocatas* in various idioms, while

35 pieces in variation forms may also have served as preludes or processional pieces; these are variously entitled *passacalles* (all but one of them in common time), *gallardas* (likewise in duple rhythm), *paseos*, *folías* and a *xacara*. Pieces with a more specific liturgical function include 60 'Pange lingua' settings, 15 *Sacris solemnii*, and finally the extraordinary 800 or so *versos*. Many of them composed around a plainsong *cantus firmus*, these were for performance in the well-established *alternatim* manner⁵, and compositionally they use the same rich variety of techniques, in miniature, as the *tientos*. Some may seem perfunctory, but a great number are attractive compositions in their own right – indeed the Portuguese scholar Marco Santiago Kastner valued them even more highly than the *tientos*⁶ – and thus very useable as service or recital repertoire. In the manuscripts many of the *versos* are grouped by type rather than liturgical order, so players can choose their own groups of pieces in the same mode.

How, then, does a newcomer navigate this enormous musical world? Not everything has yet appeared in modern editions, nor is there a complete thematic catalogue, while on recordings pieces are very often unnumbered and thus hard to find as scores. What's more, there are at least four numbering systems: the essentially arbitrary sequence of the incomplete *Opera omnia* published by the Biblioteca de Catalunya⁷; a categorised system in the dissertation of Miguel Bernal Ripoll⁸; 'WRC' numbers used by William R. Shannon, whose many Cabanilles editions are available for free download from the IMSLP website⁹; and finally the numbering in Nelson Lee's transcription of the two Felanitx manuscripts.¹⁰

The groundbreaking *Opera omnia*, central to modern awareness of Cabanilles's music, can be bought or downloaded online from the Biblioteca de Catalunya.¹¹ Players using the edition may wish to double-check it against the sources,¹² while, naturally enough, its suggestions for *musica ficta* (extra accidentals) are sometimes questionable compared with later editions drawing on modern scholarship. The first four volumes of the *Opera omnia* have been reprinted by Kalmus, though without their prefaces and commentary.

A more up-to-date starting-point can now be recommended, in the shape of a recent mid-price Bärenreiter scholarly edition,

whose three volumes¹³ contain respectively *tientos llenos*, *tientos partidos*, and variations and *versos*. For a much larger selection of *versos* go to the first two volumes of the excellent Nelson Lee edition (the third consists mainly of *tientos*); 46 colourful *versos* composed for two manuals and pedal have also been published by Andrés Cea Galán.¹⁴

The larger of Valencia Cathedral's two organs, which Cabanilles would have played on feast days, dated from 1578 and in his time probably had two manuals, with maybe even a third, *ecos* department, and seven or eight pedals with a permanent coupler to the Orgue major (Great) plus independent 8ft and 16ft Contras registers. The typical Valencian range was four octaves C-c3 without C# and D#, the Orgue major being based on 8ft stops, while the pipes of the smaller Cadireta (Positive or literally 'Chair') were based on 4ft pitch, though with an 8ft stop within the main case also available. It should be emphasised that, other than short-resonator stops of the Regalias type, the colourful reeds that we so love in Spanish organs appeared only towards the very end of the 17th century, as did the

larger multi-rank Cornetas. In the case of Valencia Cathedral a Trompeta Real and a treble Clarín (horizontal, from c#1) were installed in 1693, a fact that may suggest that Cabanilles was open to the new registers made available in two parish church organs that he had inspected.¹⁵ Nevertheless, for most of Cabanilles's music an appropriate selection of flue stops suffices, even for *tientos partidos de clarines*, a title that probably indicates a musical style rather than registration.¹⁶

style), the sectional character of many *tientos llenos* – especially the longer ones – seems to invite changes of manual and maybe of registration too. The *tientos de falsas*, which resemble Italy's *toccate di durezze e ligature* intended for the Elevation of the Host, require only one or two 8ft stops. In a *partido*, a soloistic registration in one hand, with or without mixtures, is most often balanced with an accompaniment of perhaps 8ft, 8+8, 8+4 or 8+8+4 in the other.

In Cabanilles we find a powerful blend of Hispanic intensity with Italianate brilliance and sensuality

Valencian pitch was often low, a tone or more lower than A=440, while Cabanilles's music, using chords from A flat major round to F# major, seems intended for a temperament such as sixth-comma meantone.

While *batallas* and *tocatas* demand plenum, in most *lleno* works the registration is very much at the player's discretion, and although changes of colour are never explicit (other than in a handful of pieces in echo

Cabanilles's many works in *partido* style present the performer with a more perplexing question. From the late 16th century onwards, contrasting registrations became available on single-manual Iberian organs thanks to the *medio registro* (half-register) system, whereby some or all of the stops were split in two, usually at c1/c#1. The special art of composing for such organs had already reached a peak with the publication in 1626 of Francisco ▶

■ Valencia Cathedral, where Cabanilles was organist. The 16th-century organ that Cabanilles played, set in a huge, ornately carved case regarded as one of Spain's most important renaissance masterpieces, was ransacked in 1936 during the Spanish civil war, though the doors, with painted scenes of the life of St Martin, survive and are housed in the sacristy



Diego Díez / Wikipedia



■ The Cathedral's Chapel of the Holy Chalice: the chalice, which has Arabic inscriptions dating from the 1st century, was given to the Cathedral by King Alfonso V of Aragon in 1436, and has been claimed as the true Holy Grail

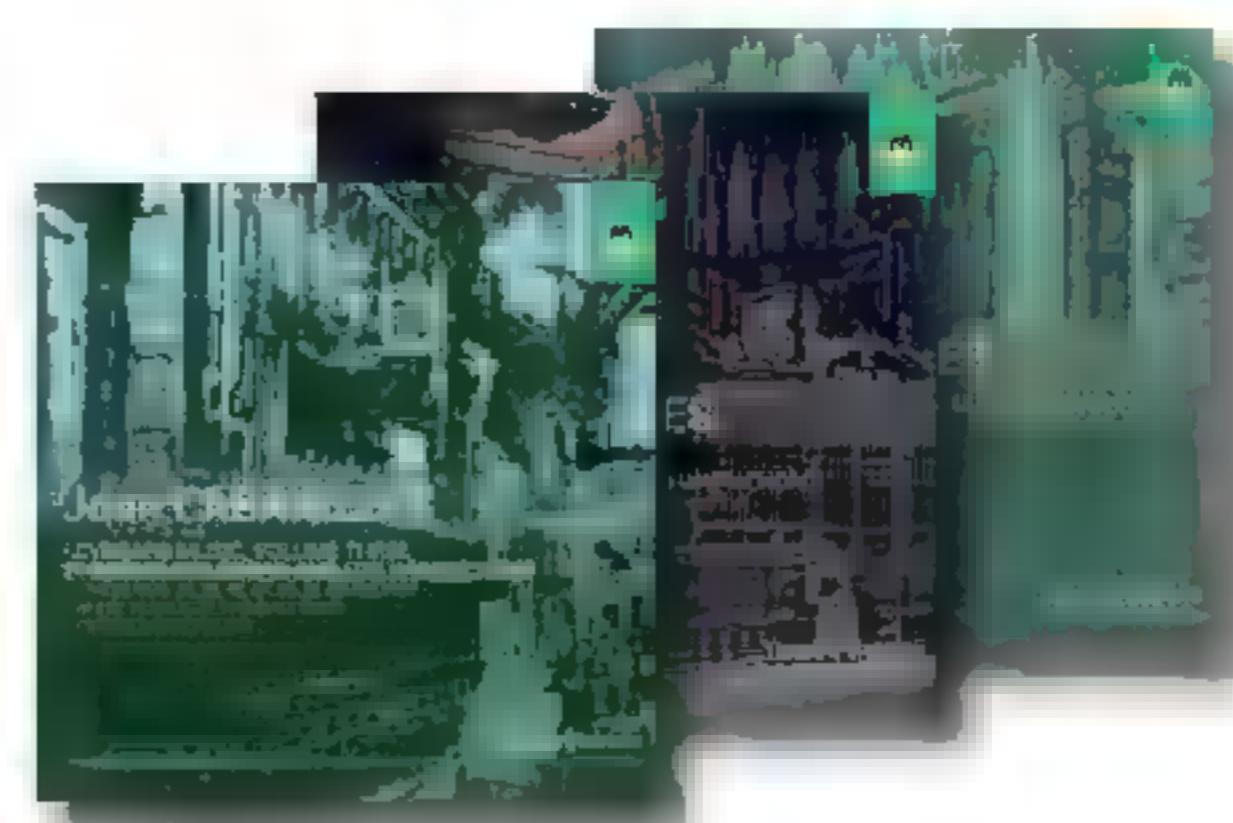
◀ Correa de Arauxo's *Facultad orgánica*. Some of Correa's works are only playable on a single-manual instrument, with freedom of voice-leading achieved by crossing the divide with the thumbs, something that cannot be done on two manuals.

Musically, Cabanilles's *partidos* are close to this *medio registro* tradition, but they never use this special single-manual technique, and are thus equally playable on two manuals. That begs the question: with two manuals available at Valencia, why would Cabanilles restrict himself to limits imposed by the *medio registro* technique? One theory is that he didn't,¹⁷ but that the surviving copies represent the music in adaptations for organists who only had access to a single-manual instrument. That would explain some strangely awkward moments, which are much more evident in *partido* than in *lleno* pieces. Such a theory challenges the player to adapt the *partidos*, most often by means of octave transpositions in either hand, to play them

as the composer may conceivably have intended.¹⁸

We find no ornament signs in Cabanilles's music, although like many Italian composers he does often write out various decorative figures in full, including traditional Spanish *quiebros* (mordents or trills starting on the main note) and *redobles* (more elaborate shapes using three or four notes), this aspect of his work remaining rooted in late renaissance habits with little or no sign of influence from, say, contemporary France. Correa de Arauxo had stated that, especially at the start of imitative works, ornaments could be added rather generously by the player, on semibreves, minims, crotchets and even quavers, where the position of the fingers made it possible. To what extent Cabanilles used this richly 'mannerist' style in his own playing remains an open question, but the player is certainly free to enliven the music with, at least, a moderate sprinkling of main-note ornaments comprising three or more notes.

Composed to enhance the liturgical authority of a great cathedral, Cabanilles's work should always sound vivid and communicative. In general, a strict tempo will best suit both contrapuntal and dance-like passages, while sections in the Italian toccata style demand a freer, more rhetorical response, as do his inspired and often extended flights of soloistic fancy. This is music that offers an endless vista of challenges and pleasures. ■
The first three volumes of Joan Cabanilles: Keyboard Music, performed by Timothy Roberts, are now available from Toccata Classics, toccataclassics.com.



References

1. Three of Cabanilles's 10 surviving vocal works – *Beatus vir*, *Magnificat* and *Mi esposo aseta sus flechas* – do appear in a manuscript that might be in his own hand (Valencia Cathedral Archive, Leg. 37, no.10 bis).
2. MS 386 (bit.ly/2m1O9X6) and MS 387 (bit.ly/2moP3Ns).
3. The well-known *Batalla imperial* misattributed to Cabanilles in MS 387 was by Johann Casper Kerll.
4. *Procedimientos constructivos en la música para órgano de Joan Cabanilles* (University of Madrid, 2003); available online at bit.ly/2k1sbbk.
5. That is, playing alternate verses of plainsong, in Masses, Magnificats, hymns or other canticles, as organ solos. See Bernadette Nelson, 'Alternatim Practice in 17th-century Spain: the Integration of Organ Versets and Plainchant in Psalms and Canticles', *Early Music* 22/2 (1994), pp. 239-259.
6. Miguel Bernal Ripoll, *Procedimientos* (see footnote 4), p. 44.
7. 1927-2008, ed. Higini Anglés (vols. 1-4) and José Climent (5-9). The edition consists mainly of *tientos*, alongside variation works in vol.2 and some *versos* from vol.5 onwards.
8. See footnote 5.
9. bit.ly/2kUsJuv
10. *Keyboard Music from the Felanitx Manuscripts*, *Corpus of Early Keyboard Music*, vol. 48, fasc. 1-5 (4 and 5 are in preparation), American Institute of Musicology, Münster and Madison, 1999-.
11. <https://llibreria.gencat.cat/search.php>, enter Cabanilles in 'Cercador de publicacions'.
12. See footnote 2.
13. *Joan Cabanilles, Selected Works for Organ*, ed. Miguel Bernal Ripoll and Gerhard Doderer.
14. *Trios a dos teclados y pedal en el entorno de Cabanilles*, Instituto del Órgano Hispano, 2018.
15. As suggested by Nelson Lee in *Keyboard Music from the Felanitx Manuscripts*, fasc. 3, p. xx.
16. For the specification of the Cathedral organs, together with some 17th-century Catalan and Valencian registrations, see Andrés Cea Galán, *La mano derecha de Cabanilles*, Instituto del Órgano Hispano, 2016, pp. 20-27.
17. As argued in detail by Cea Galán in *La mano derecha de Cabanilles*. This is a complex issue on which research continues.
18. As I myself do in three Cabanilles CDs for Toccata Classics: TOCC 0391, 0406 and 0451.

Harpsichordist and predominantly manualiter organist Timothy Roberts was principal keyboardist of the Gabrieli Consort & Players for 20 years and subsequently resided in Mallorca.



Freestyle

BY GRAEME KAY

Eager for Egarr; and ■ real page-turner...

Richard Egarr is a fascinating musician to observe, as a ringside seat for a superb performance of Handel's *Jephtha* at the Proms confirmed. For the latest in the Proms' annual Handel oratorio outings, he had assembled an international cast including Allan Clayton as Jephtha, Jeanine De Bique (Iphis), Hilary Summers (Storgè), Tim Mead (Hamor), Rowan Pierce (Angel), and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Chorus. Something of a firecracker on stage, Egarr's animated style steers clear of histrionics, but the music clearly courses through every vein in his body. While the soloists behind him – all seasoned opera performers – could safely be left in command of the forestage, this was especially so in his conducting of the chorus, prepared by Gregory Batsleer: every note of every bar of every part seemed to have a finger, or ■ palm, or even a fist deployed to shape the music. Egarr leaps up and down from the harpsichord, ease of movement facilitated by a seat placed at right angles to the stage and pushed under the keyboards – he rides it motorbike-style. And very unusually, Egarr stands out, rather delightfully, because the other conducting aid at his command is his glasses: glasses on, glasses off, glasses on nose, glasses on top of head, glasses dangling from hand, glasses folded in fist. These look like reflex actions, but maybe his use of spectacles carries layers of interpretative meaning. Perhaps Richard could switch to varifocals – but he wouldn't be nearly so interesting to watch.

I'll now come to the soloist I missed out above. The American bass-baritone Cody Quattlebaum was singing the part of Zebul, Jephtha's half-brother, who calls for the exiled warrior to be welcomed back as the Israelites' champion against the Ammonites.

Cody certainly looked and sounded the part – he was dressed in a full-length black coat and sporting a positively leonine mane of hair. And instead of ■ score, he was rocking a tablet – while all around him were flicking pages, Quattlebaum was tapping and swiping. Which leads me to open a further chapter in the adventures of page-turning folk which I started in the last issue.

Self-turning music makes page-turners redundant, of course, and there are lots of advantages – a back-lit screen in dim surroundings like churches, for example. I've seen piano recitalists and orchestral musicians playing off tablets before, but never a choral soloist and I have to say that if it was me, I'd be nervous, especially as – based on a mountain of empirical evidence – I subscribe to the theory that if a thing can possibly go wrong, it will. Particularly if it's digital. Now, I've been using an iPad (other tablets are available) for five years and I love it. It's been almost 100 per cent reliable. I say 'almost' because it does occasionally freeze and need time to re-set itself. There isn't time for that in the middle of a Handel aria. Or to recharge a suddenly spent battery. Of course, you can fumble the pages in a printed score but basically all of the musical information is there in your hand, not in an invisible stream of electrons. And if you drop a score you can pick it up. But if you drop a tablet, it will probably do what dropped mobile phones invariably do – spill their guts (why do they do that?) and crack their screens.

Oh, and a nice printed score of *Jephtha* doesn't need to be plugged in. ■

Graeme Kay is a digital platforms producer for BBC Radio 3 and 4.



▲ *Jephtha* ■ the Proms

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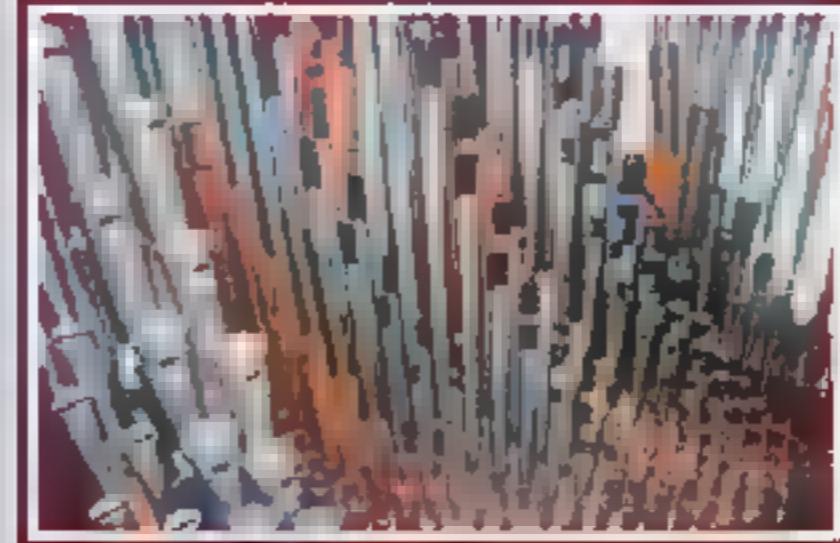
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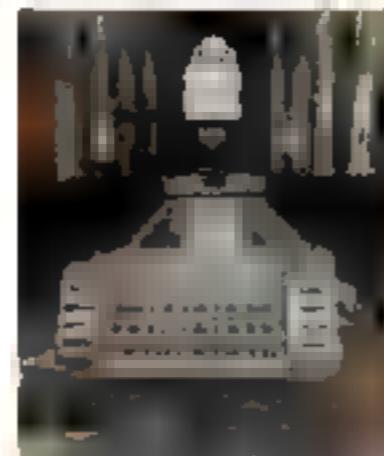
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Leaving aside everything that Walter Damrosch has done for our country and the French musicians, I wish to pay my tribute to the extremely expressive interpretation at the concerts he has given lately at the Opera. Whether it is classical, romantic, or modern music, Damrosch first of all endeavors to set off and illustrate what we call the "melos," the element of expression, the voice that must rise above all the other voices of the orchestra. He knows how to distribute the agogic action, the dynamic power, and he is not afraid—even in Beethoven's works and in spite of the surprise this caused to our public—to accelerate or slacken the movement when the necessities of expression demand it.

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Jay Capperauld

Arcadia

Text: Alexander Hume (verses from 'Of the Day of Estivall')

A poem by a 16th-century Scottish poet inspired Jay Capperauld to write a work for unaccompanied SSAATTBB choir; he talks to Shirley Ratcliffe



■ 'We must be pragmatic and pro-active with our time': Jay Capperauld

It is certainly true that composers need to be able to turn their hand to many alternative creative outlets: orchestration, type-setting work, conducting, teaching and playing.' Wise words from Scottish composer Jay Capperauld as we discuss the different ways a young composer can earn a living. 'This means we must be pragmatic and pro-active with our time. I always make sure to keep a relatively strict schedule and plan my days so that I get the most out of each role, especially where my writing is concerned.'

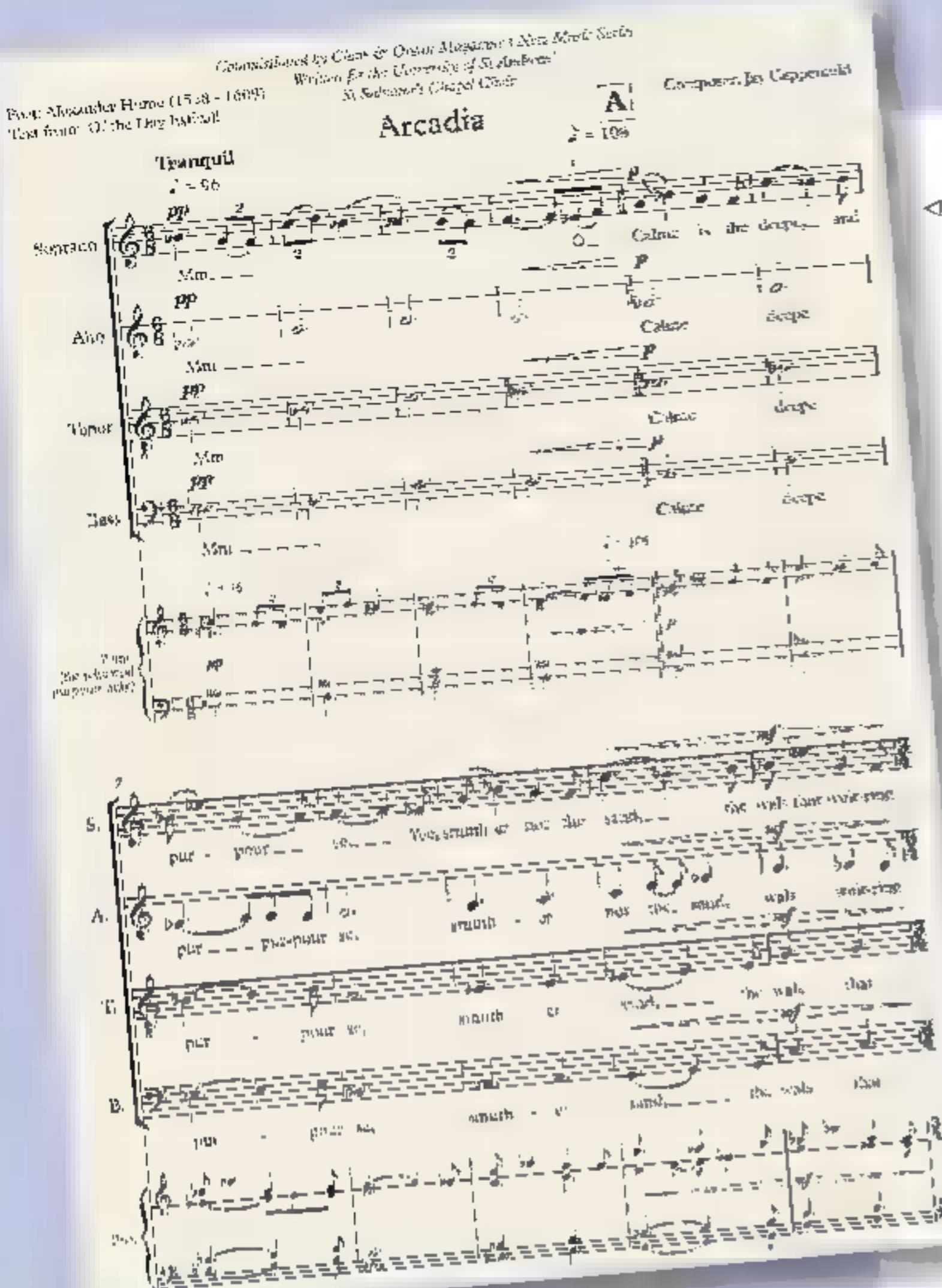
Coming from the same region in Scotland as Sir James MacMillan, he is able to look on the pre-eminent Scottish composer as a kind of mentor: 'I know I can always turn to him for advice, as James is incredibly supportive. He presented me with my first ever paid commission, which was a real honour.' Capperauld wrote a brass quintet for the first year of the Cumnock Tryst Festival in 2014, which was performed at Prince Charles's Dumfries House.

Capperauld's route into music is a familiar one: learning the piano from a young age,

he then progressed to the cornet, oboe, bassoon and saxophone: 'The saxophone's vocal qualities spoke to me at the age of 14 when I picked it up. I was able to try all these instruments because of the free instrumental tuition that was available to my generation. Mine was one of the last generations to feel its benefits, and I fear the younger generation will miss out on those same opportunities, particularly those from a working-class background like myself, who may not be able to afford the tuition fees.'

'I decided on a career in music as a teenager, before I was capable enough to be considered for higher education. I remember at some point buying a book about composers throughout history, which included composers of the present day, and I learned that it is a viable career option.' Capperauld began to compose when he was eight. 'My favourite aspect of music theory was rhythm dictation, which led me to want to write my own riffs and rhythms. This developed into composing my own tunes and short melodies, which stems from my innate compulsion to write music and find out how it works by picking apart its various elements.'

The next step was to apply to the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, where he studied saxophone as part of a BMus post-graduate Diploma course, and then went on to complete a Master's in Composition. This opened the door for him to work with some of Scotland's major music organisations: 'I endeavour to develop my technique as each new piece comes into being. Certainly, working with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic, Royal Scottish National Orchestra and the ▶



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The premiere of *Arcadia* will be given by St Salvator's Chapel Choir directed by Claire Innes-Hopkins at the University of St Andrews Graduation Ceremonies on Tuesday 3 and Wednesday 4 December, Younger Hall, St Andrews.

« National Youth Orchestra of Scotland has advanced my career hugely and set [me on] a firm path that I hope to continue to tread in the coming years.'

Capperauld studied for his Master's with Dr Gordon McPherson: 'He had a huge influence on my musical outlook during my time at the Conservatoire. The most important thing I gained from him is self-confidence, and to trust in my own abilities. It is very easy to succumb to negativity in the creative world, and the hardest part is finding a balance between those negative voices in your own head and the immovable positive convictions we often feel about our ideas. Gordon helped me to understand and find a balance between those voices by listening to my instinct and acknowledging my capabilities, so that I could recognise and build confidence in my ideas.' Capperauld has been able to pass on this very sound advice to young students, as ■ short extract of him on YouTube shows. 'I don't do this as

saxophonist Lewis Banks. I am also a member of the board of trustees which, as a local lad, is ■ huge privilege as well as a huge learning curve in the practicalities of running a music festival like this one.'

The text for C&O's commission for the St Andrews University graduation ceremony was selected by the principal, Sally Mapstone, an expert in medieval and renaissance Scottish literature. 'We discussed various options until we decided upon the poem *Of the Day of Estival* by Alexander Hume, who was educated at the university and graduated in 1574. We felt it adequately celebrated the University's deep historical significance as one of Scotland's oldest educational establishments.'

Capperauld didn't have any restrictions for writing the music. 'I found this liberating, as you have free rein to explore as much or as little as you wish. I knew the capabilities of St Salvator's Chapel Choir from listening to its recordings, and I wanted to match its pure,

'Gordon McPherson helped me to listen to my instinct and acknowledge my capabilities'

often as I would like, but I love speaking with the younger generation of composers about their ideas and how they see the composition world. I don't see myself as an educator, but I really love those moments where you can see a switch turn on in their heads which instils an idea, or challenges and questions their views about composition.'

There are many genres of music open to composers which they are eager to explore, and Capperauld is no exception: 'I ■■■ all the time influenced by different composers in many ways from Beethoven, Ligeti, Ives, Birtwistle and Boulanger to Kate Bush, David Bowie, FKA Twigs, NAO, and all my contemporaries in between. The difficulty is never to let those influences infiltrate my music directly. I think it is important to allow each individual piece of music to be precisely what it needs to be, regardless of what is influencing me when I am composing it.'

Capperauld has been commissioned several times by the Cumnock Tryst Festival. 'In addition, I have also been able to bring to it my own external projects, such as The Wallace Collection and the young upcoming

crystalline qualities of style in my writing.' He set it for unaccompanied SATB choir divisi (SSAATTBB). 'I have always revered the sonorities of the unaccompanied voice, particularly in the a cappella renaissance music of William Byrd, Juan de Anchieta, Gesualdo and Palestrina. I wanted to capture that soundworld to accompany Hume's 16th-century words. They strike me as so straightforward and "of the earth" that I wanted to strip away my often complex musical language, to reveal a simple and honest expression that would complement this poem. Sometimes less is more, and this lilting music suited the words as much as the pastoral imagery being described by Hume. I wanted to create a reflective and thoughtful atmosphere. I always felt my days graduating at the Conservatoire – although full of joy – were so hectic and full-on; there was never a moment to sit and take stock. Through *Arcadia* my aim is to create a peaceful moment for the graduating students to reflect, contemplate and absorb the fruits of their labour.'

www.jaycapperauld.com



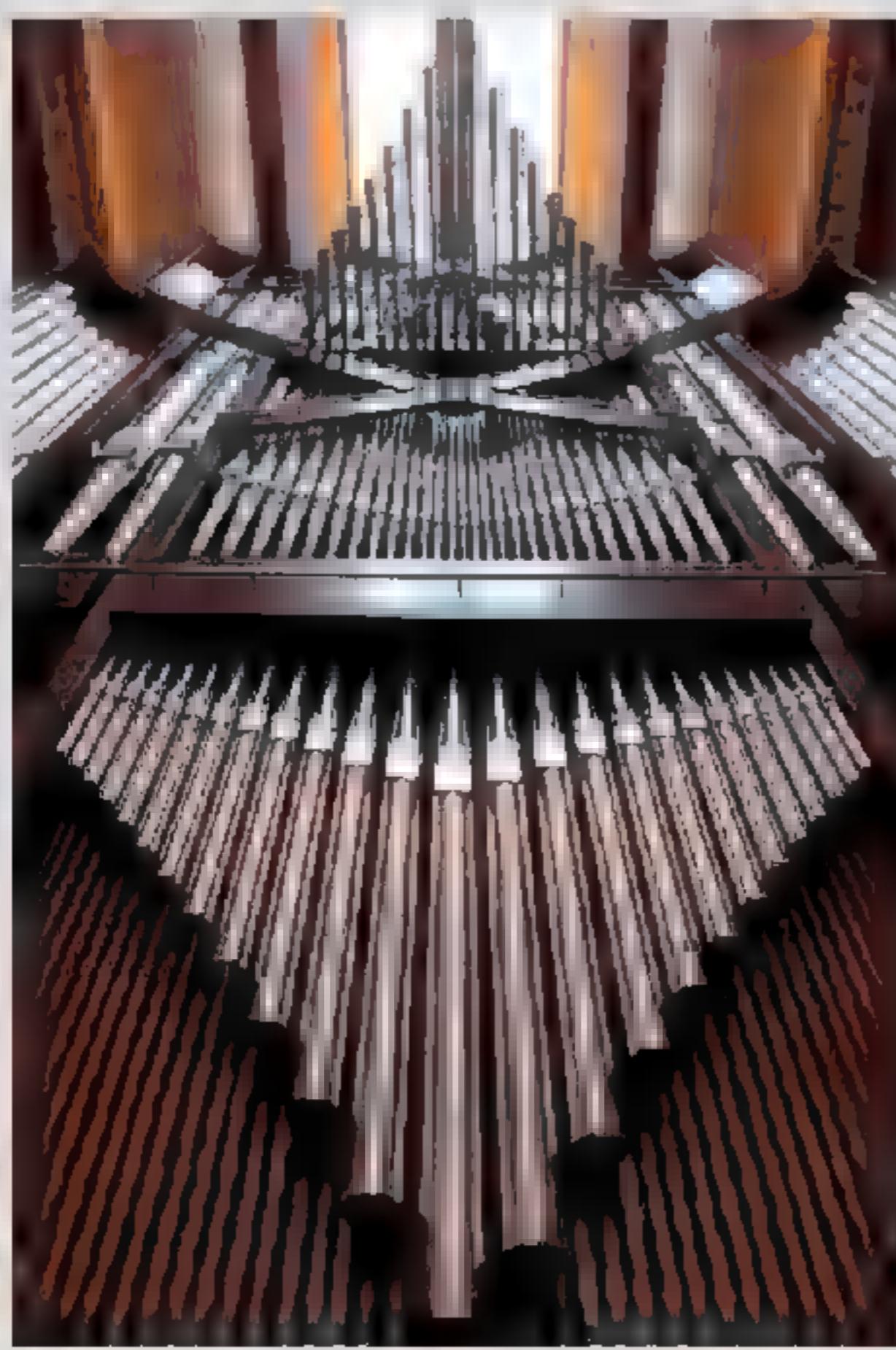
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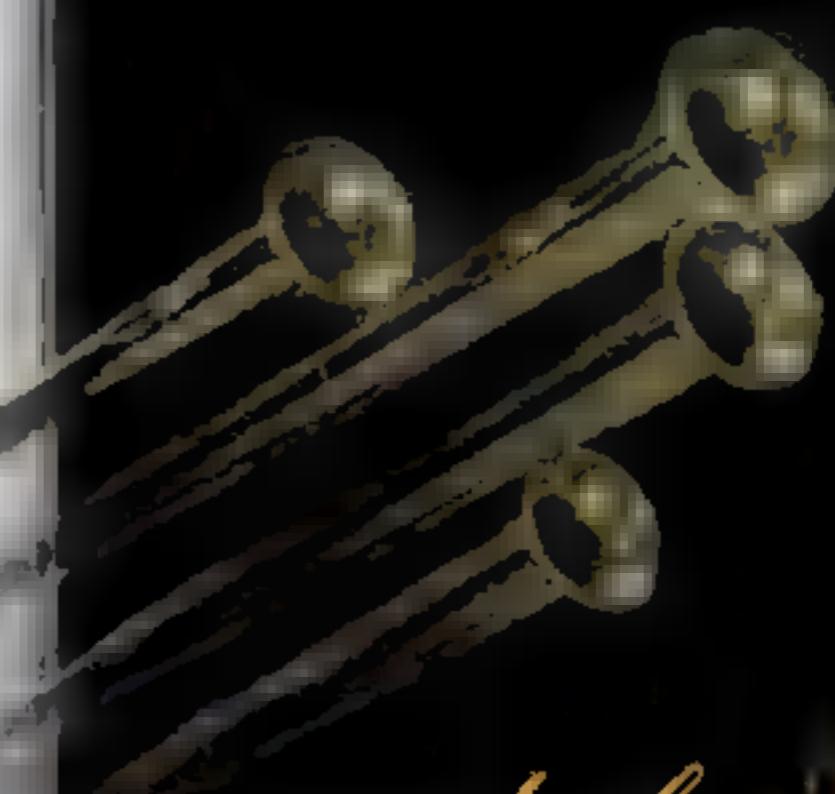
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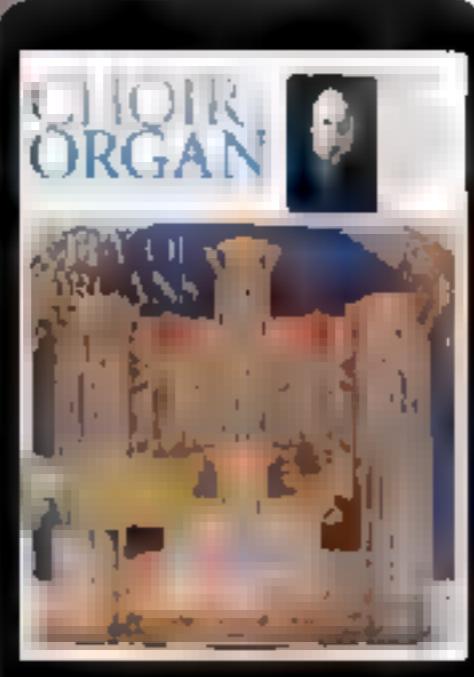
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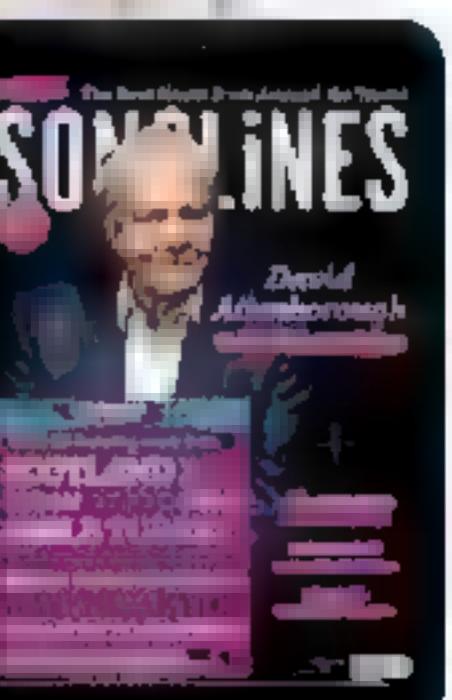
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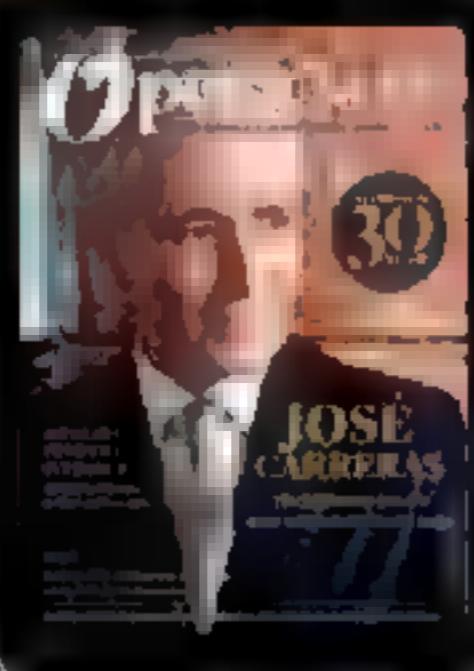
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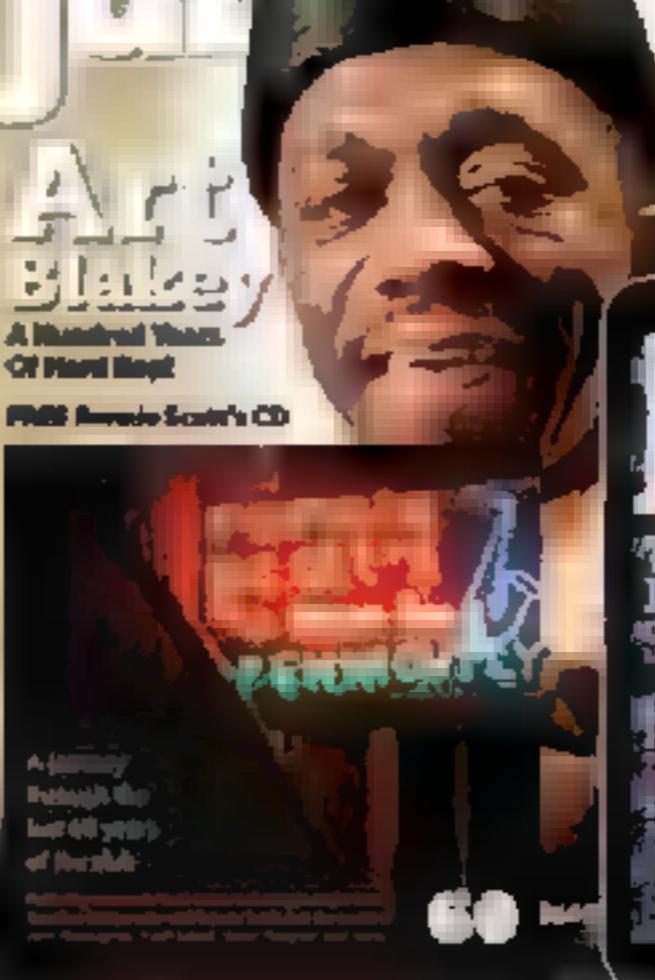
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A feast for the senses

Lavish, nurturing and switched on to the 21st century – the vision behind the Antwerp-based festival *Laus Polyphoniae* is explored as Bart Demuyt, director of AMUZ, speaks to **Rebecca Tavener**. PHOTOS JOHAN BECKERS

Antwerp is a calm, cosmopolitan, friendly, walking/cycling/scootering sort of a place. Prosperous, elegant, fashionable and foodie – and, in spite of being knocked about a bit in two world wars, offering antique charm around every corner of the centre alongside harmonious modern architecture. Trams and metro keep cars off the streets and, with no hills, the pedestrian experience is a pleasure. It is also home to a great deal of cultural activity, including one of Europe's most prestigious early music festivals, *Laus Polyphoniae*, an annual 10-day event at the end of August, based at AMUZ, the converted Augustinian church, which is also an all-year-round venue. If there is a single word to sum up the visitor experience to both city and festival, it might be 'synergy'.

Bart Demuyt, director of AMUZ (Flanders Festival-Antwerp) and director of the Alamire Foundation (centre for music in the Low Countries), is a persuasive advocate

for both festival and venue, and a passionate supporter of the artists and musicologists who conspire to revivify the rich repertoires of the distant past for the delight of everyone today. While maintaining a core purpose – 'Our goal is to promote only historically informed performance; the venue plays a vital part' – Demuyt is open to all kinds of (justifiable) views on performance practice: 'If someone wants to play Stravinsky they should do so using gut strings! In choral terms, this means that on one evening the pure and focused tones of the Huelgas Ensemble might be on the menu, and the characterful, idiosyncratically 'grainy' delivery of Graindelavoix on another. 'It is not a case of "it has to be done like that", we are living in the 21st century so we take the information and find other approaches, with all different flavours together.'

In August, *Laus Polyphoniae* celebrated its 26th festival, a glorious ten-day binge of

late medieval polyphony on the theme of Mary of Burgundy, performed by a stellar roster of the top ensembles, including Stile Antico, Gothic Voices, the Binchois Consort, Ensemble Leones, and some bright new kids on the block like Ratas del viejo Mundo. These performances are complemented by accessible talks from leading musicologists, offering audiences of all levels of musical knowledge a learning experience with no assumption that this is just for experts. 'We always do concerts in relationship with research,' says Demuyt, pointing to a very close relationship with the University of Leuven and, more specifically, with the Alamire Foundation, 'and all the results of our research are implemented here.'

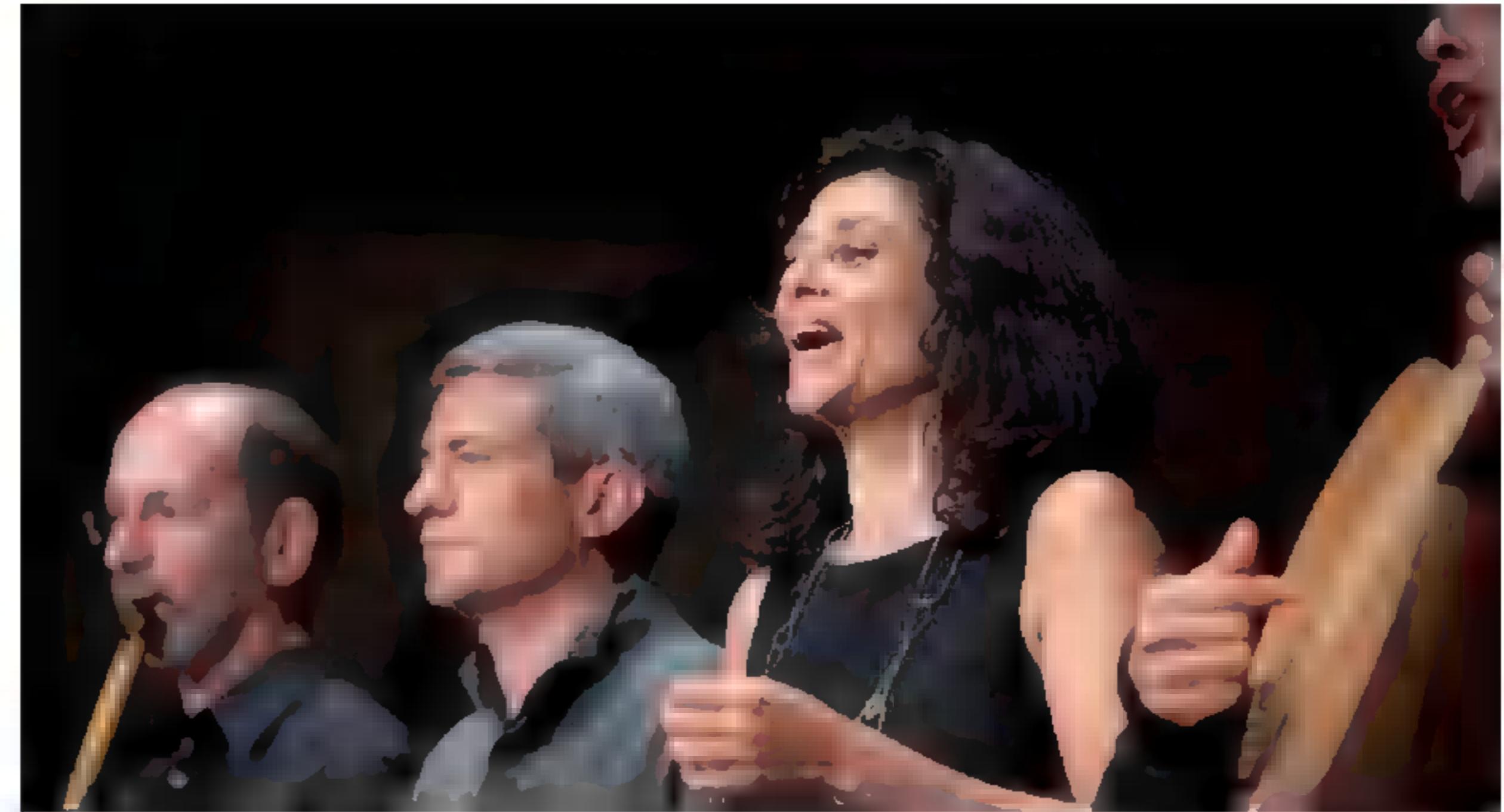
There is an admirable synergy to every aspect of the production and, alongside performances by established professional artists, there are workshops for school children and a programme for emerging

■ Michael Pas, Katelyne Lanneau and Ellen Schaafraet perform literature and music





▲ (l) The lutes in Ratas del viejo Mundo help to combine Burgundian repertoire with age-old Lithuanian传统s; (r) Micrologus conjure 15th-century Florence with carnival and penitential songs



ensembles: the International Young Artist's Presentation (IYAP), offering expert tutelage to new groups. In this way, both the audiences and the performers of the future are nurtured. As Demuyt expresses it, 'You have to invest in the younger generation,' not only professionally but as part of an enlightened education process. All ages are welcome at concerts, at their parents' discretion, and Demuyt is keen to point out that they are not learning solely about music, but also about art and architecture.

The main venue dates from 1608, a baroque architectural beauty that once housed three Rubens altarpieces, commissioned by the Augustinians, now in the Royal Museum. Their place has been taken by stunning new works commissioned by the City of Antwerp from Jan Fabre, made from the iridescent wings of the scarab beetle, and a visual metaphor for events that bring the ancient firmly into the present moment. A well-loved space, no wonder that all the performances are sell-outs. AMUZ is not the only magnificent venue available to the festival, however, and performances are also located in St-Pauluskerk, St-Andrieskerk, and the Rubens House, all a delight for the eye as well as the ear.

In spite of optimal audience demand, so lavish an event needs a great deal of support: 'Flanders for many years has invested greatly in culture and the City of Antwerp invests around 700,000 euros each year,' says Demuyt, 'and around 95 per cent of the funding for Laus Polyphoniae comes from public money.'

He stresses the fact that culture is supported by taxpayers on the assumption that this is right and proper in a civilised society. Similarly, funding for research is also available, including a recent agreement with the French government to support research into French polyphony with AMUZ and the festival being the perfect platform. 'There's a lot of music that is never done – in the coming years we'll invest in young singers to bring it back to our society.'

Demuyt selects performers, both young and more mature, by travelling to hear them rather than relying on recordings. 'You have to hear the performers "live" and speak with them, have a discussion,' he explains, and he plans several years ahead. Deciding the theme is 'always a difficult question'. In 2020 it will be 'Counterpoint', and Josquin des Prez will be the focus for 2021 (for the 500th anniversary of his death); in 2022 it will be all about Antwerp itself, and in 2023 the relationship of chant with polyphony. He praises the 'wonderful assistants' with whom he can discuss programming.

There is now a mini-festival, held early in each new year, keeping momentum going. The greatest future challenge is the need for bigger spaces due to public demand. Though the emphasis has been on events in Antwerp, Demuyt has been expanding activities abroad with projects this year in Rome and Venice. There are plans to collaborate in York in 2021 with performances of Franco-Flemish polyphony, and there is interest in Germany – so ripples are spreading from AMUZ and Antwerp across Europe in a manner Demuyt

likened to the spread of British polyphony from the 1970s onwards by our celebrated groups.

To sum up in Demuyt's own words, 'Here in Antwerp, we believe in investing in people, investing in research, and in bringing together musicians and musicologists.' The fruits of such supportive synergy are a joy to witness. Among those fruits are recordings made at AMUZ, such as the latest CD from the Sollazzo Ensemble, a group mentored by Demuyt, who won the Young Artists Prize at the York Early Music Festival in 2015, featuring material from the Leuven Chansonnier: volume one in a series which will present the entire, recently discovered manuscript to the world. A facsimile edition is also available.

AMUZ and Laus Polyphoniae are not the only musical games in town: readers will surely be interested in the International Organ Recital Series in the Cathedral, offering all kinds of repertoire on two fine instruments. There's also a magnificent new concert hall for symphonic events, with 25 per cent off ticket prices if one buys the 'Antwerp Card'. Antwerp awaits with all kinds of synergies and the sort of joined-up tourist thinking that eases the way of incoming culture-vultures: better book early for Laus Polyphoniae 2020, though, before those coveted tickets fly away. ■

Rebecca Tavener was the guest of Visit Antwerp, Visit Flanders, and AMUZ.
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FESTIVALS 2019-20

Dates for your diary

2019

NOVEMBER

Brighton Early Music Festival

25 Oct-10 Nov, Brighton, UK

Contact Cathy Boyes

cathy@bremf.org.uk
bremf.org.uk

London International Festival of Early Music

7-9 Nov, Blackheath Halls, London, UK

Contact +44 20 7062 9000

london@earlymusicshop.com
earlymusicshop.com

Houston Early Music Festival

7-17 Nov, Houston, Texas, US

Contact +1 713 533 0080

info@mercuryhouston.org
houstonearlymusicfestival.org

Texas Toot

22-24 Nov, Palestine, Texas, US

Contact info@toot.org

toot.org

Festival Bach Montreal

22 Nov-7 Dec, Montreal, Canada

Box office +1 514 4843 3414
info@bach-academie-montreal.com

festivalbachmontreal.com

Boulder Bach Festival

Nov-May, Boulder, Colorado, US

Contact via website

boulderbachfestival.org

DECEMBER

Grandezza Meraviglie - Festival Musicale Estense

9 Aug-22 Dec, Modena, Italy

Contact +39 059214333

info@grandezzemeraviglie.it
grandezzemeraviglie.it

York Early Music Christmas Festival

7-14 Dec, York, UK

Box office +44 1904 658338
info@ncem.co.uk
www.ncem.co.uk

2020

JANUARY

Valletta International Baroque Festival

10-25 Jan, Valletta, Malta

Contact +356 21 222618

bookings@teatrumanoel.com.mt

Bach Academie Brugge

14-19 Jan, Bruges, Belgium

Contact +32 5047 6999

info@concertgebouw.be

Resonanzen

18-26 Jan, Vienna, Austria

Contact +43 1 242002

ticket@konzerthaus.at

konzerthaus.at/resonances

FEBRUARY

Handel Festival, Karlsruhe

Feb (dates TBC), Karlsruhe, Germany

staatstheater.karlsruhe.de

Santa Cruz Baroque Festival

Feb-Mar, Santa Cruz, California, US

Contact +1 831 457 9693

scbaroque.org

MARCH

Pacific Baroque Festival

5-8 Mar, Victoria, Canada

Contact +1 250 590 0523

pacbaroque@earlymusic.bc.ca

pacbaroque.com

London Handel Festival

5 Mar-10 Apr, London, UK

Box office +44 1460 54660

london-handel-festival.com

APRIL

Misteria Paschalia Festival

Apr (dates TBC), Krakow, Poland

Box office +48 22 591 8383

misteriapaschalia.com

MAY

Bloomington Early Music Festival

May (dates TBC), Bloomington, Indiana, US

Contact office@blemf.org

blemf.org

Indianapolis Early Music Festival

May-Jul, Indianapolis, Indiana, US

Contact +1 317 577 9731

info@iemusic.org

iemusic.org

Internationale Barocktag

May (dates announced at end of Nov), Stift Melk, Austria

Contact +43 2752 540 60

office@wachaukulturmelk.at
wachaukulturmelk.at

Leicester Early Music Festival

May-Jun (dates TBC), Leicester, UK

Contact +44 116 270 9984

earlymusicleicester.co.uk

London Festival of Baroque Music

May (dates announced on 14 Jan 2020), London, UK

Box office +44 20 7222 1061

info@lfbm.org.uk
lfbm.org.uk

Monteverdi Festival

May (dates TBC), Cremona, Italy

Contact biglietteria@teatroponchielli.it

monteverdifestivalcremona.it

Bristol Early Music

1-3 May, Bristol, UK

Contact contact@bristolearlymusicfestival.uk
bristolearlymusicfestival.uk

Göttingen International Handel Festival

20 May-1 Jun, Göttingen, Germany

Contact +49 551 3848130
haendel-festspiele.de

Galway Early Music Festival

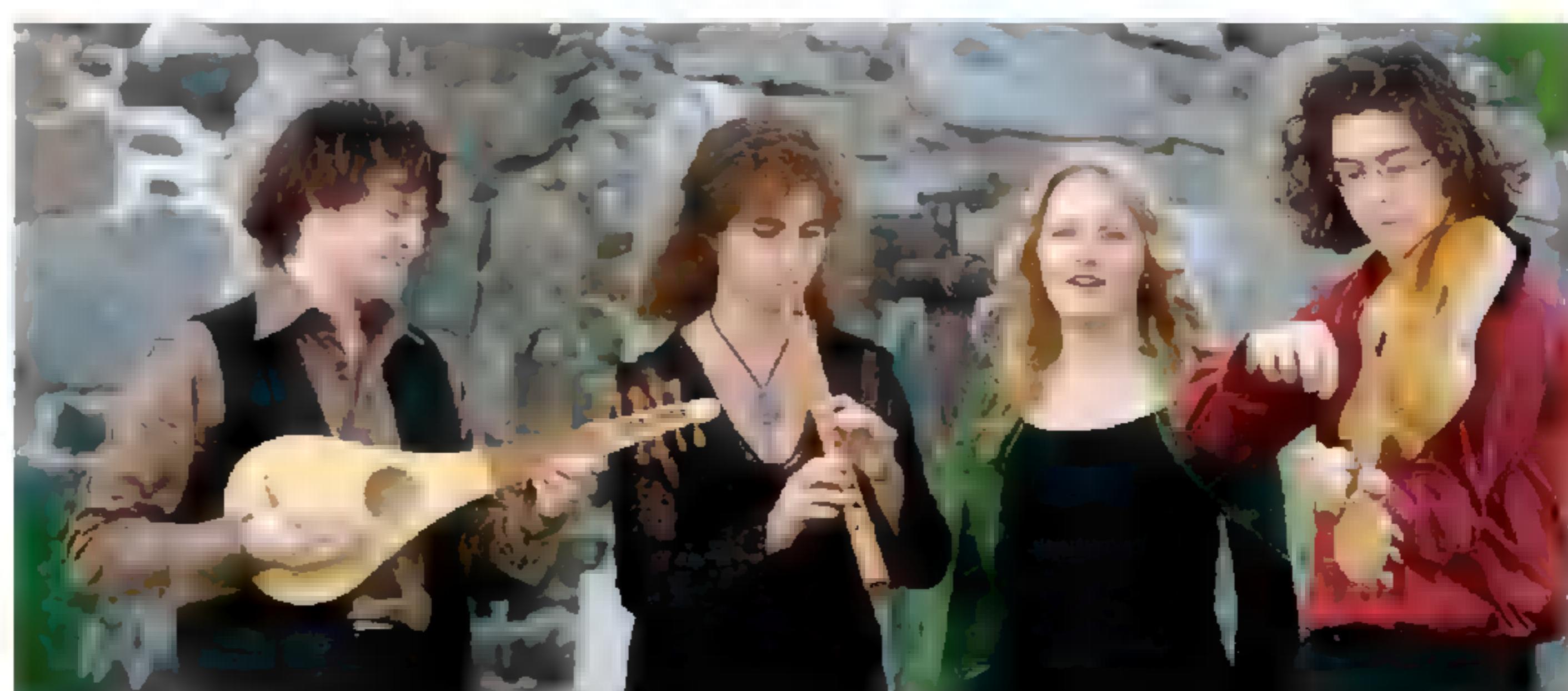
22-24 May, Galway, Ireland

Contact +353 83461 9039
info@galwayearlymusic.com
galwayearlymusic.com

Beverley & East Riding Early Music Festival

29-31 May, Beverley, Yorkshire, UK

Box office +44 1904 658338
info@ncem.co.uk
ncem.co.uk



LURDO VUDRENICA

Piccolo Spoleto Festival
22 May-7 Jun, Charleston, South Carolina, US
Contact +1 843 724 7305
culturalaffairs@charleston-sc.gov
piccolospoleto.com

JUNE
Montreal Baroque Festival
Jun (dates TBC), Montreal, Canada
Contact +1 514 845 7171
info@montrealbaroque.com
montrealbaroque.com
Stockholm Early Music Festival
Jun (dates TBC), Stockholm, Sweden
Contact info@semf.se
semf.se
Stour Music Festival
Jun (dates TBC), East Kent, UK
stourmusic.org.uk
Berkeley Festival & Exhibition
7-14 Jun, Berkeley, California, US
Contact +1 510 528 1725
sfems.org
Bachfest Leipzig
11-21 Jun, Leipzig, Germany
Contact +49 341 9137 300
bachfest@bach-leipzig.de
bachfestleipzig.de

JULY
Carmel Bach Festival
Jul (dates TBC), Carmel, California, US
Contact +1 831 624 1521
info@bachfestival.org
bachfestival.org
Festival de Beaune
Jul (dates TBC), Beaune, France
Contact +33 3802 29729
contact@festivalbeaune.com
festivalbeaune.com
Festival ■ Musique Ancienne de Saint-Savin
Jul (dates TBC), Saint-Savin, France
Contact musiqueanciennepays-desgaves@gmail.com
festivalsaintsavin.com
Festival d'Aix-en-Provence
Jul (dates TBC), Aix-en-Provence, France

Contact +33 43408 0217
billetterie@festival-aix.com
festival-aix.com

Festival RenaissanceS
Bar-le-Duc
Jul (dates TBC), Bar-le-Duc, France

Contact +33 32979 3265
renaissances@barleduc.fr
festivalrenaissances.fr

Innsbruck Festival of Early Music

Jul (dates TBC), Innsbruck, Austria
Contact +43 5125 2074 504
festwochen@altemusik.at
altemusik.at

Riga ■ Rundāle International Early Music Festival

Jul (dates TBC), Rundāle Palace, Latvia

Summer Festivities of Early Music

Jul (dates TBC), Prague, Czech Republic

Contact +420 731 448 346
vstupenky@letnislavnosti.cz
letnislavnosti.cz

York Early Music Festival

3-11 Jul, York, UK
Box office +44 1904 658338
ncem.co.uk/yemf

Amherst Early Music Festival

5-19 July, New London, Connecticut, US

Contact +1 781 488 3337
info@amherstearlymusic.org
amherstearlymusic.org

Madison Early Music Festival

11-18 Jul, Madison, Wisconsin, US

Contact +1 608 890 1118
memf@arts.wisc.edu
memf.wisc.edu

FIMA - Festival di Musica

Antica
20-29 Jul, Urbino, Italy
Contact +39 06321 0806
biblio.fima@libero.it
fima-online.org

Lameque International Festival of Baroque Music

23-25 Jul, Lamèque, Canada
Contact +1 506 344 3261
baroque@lameque.ca
festivalbaroque.com

Donaufestwochen

31 Jul-16 Aug, Strudengau, Austria
Contact +43 7268 26857
office@donau-feswochen.at
donau-festwochen.at

AUGUST

Festival ■ Sablé
Aug (dates TBC), Sablé-sur-Sarthe, France

Contact +33 24362 2222
billetterie@lentracte-sable.fr
sablesursarthe.fr

Le Festival International de Musique Ancienne ■ Simiane

Aug (dates TBC), Simiane-la-Rotonde, France

Contact +33 49275 9014
festivalaccueil@gmail.com
festival-simiane.com

Korkyra Baroque Festival

Aug-Sep (dates TBC), Korčula, Croatia

Contact korkyra.
baroquefestival@gmail.com
korkyrabaroque.com

MAfestival Brugge

Aug (dates TBC), Bruges, Belgium
Contact +32 7022 3302
mafestival.be

Seviqc Brežice

Aug (dates TBC), Ljubljana, Slovenia
Contact +386 1242 0812
info@k-ramovs.si
seviqc-brezice.si

Vancouver Bach Festival

Aug (dates TBC), Vancouver, Canada
Contact +1 604 732 1610
earlymusic.bc.ca

Utrecht Early Music Festival
28 Aug-6 Sep, Utrecht, Netherlands

Contact +31 30 232 9000
info@oudemuziek.nl
oudemuziek.nl/festival

2021

JUNE
Boston Early Music Festival

6-13 Jun, Boston, MA, US
Contact +1 617 6611812
bemf@bemf.org
bemf.org



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Brighton Early Music Festival: St Paul's Church,
West Street, Brighton



A European Christmas

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The Octagon Chapel, Colegate, Norwich

Sunday 2 December (3.00 pm)

St John's Smith Square, London



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SARAH MAGURKOWSKI

▲ Selwyn College Choir will perform pieces from all three volumes during the launch Evensong in November

Louder than words

In November, Selwyn College Choir will help launch a new sacred music anthology. The curator, Louise Stewart, speaks to **Harriet Clifford** about her social justice project and what it means for the future of church music

The invisibility of one half of the population within sacred music has gone relatively unnoticed, until now. Within the next year, a new sacred music anthology will be on our bookshelves. Like any other good collection, it will include pieces from historical, established and emerging composers, in a range of difficulties, accessible to all choirs which sing church music. However, this anthology, in its three separate volumes, will be the first of its kind: every piece of music will have been composed by a woman.

On International Women's Day three years ago, Louise Stewart and Olivia Sparkhall envisioned producing a church service written, led and composed entirely by women. However, this endeavour proved almost impossible through lack of existing

resources, so they decided to create the kind of material they had been hoping to find.

Stewart grew up as a chorister in her parish choir, before reading music at Exeter University. During these three years, she did not study a single piece of music by a female composer, although at the time found this entirely 'unsurprising'. She then went on to

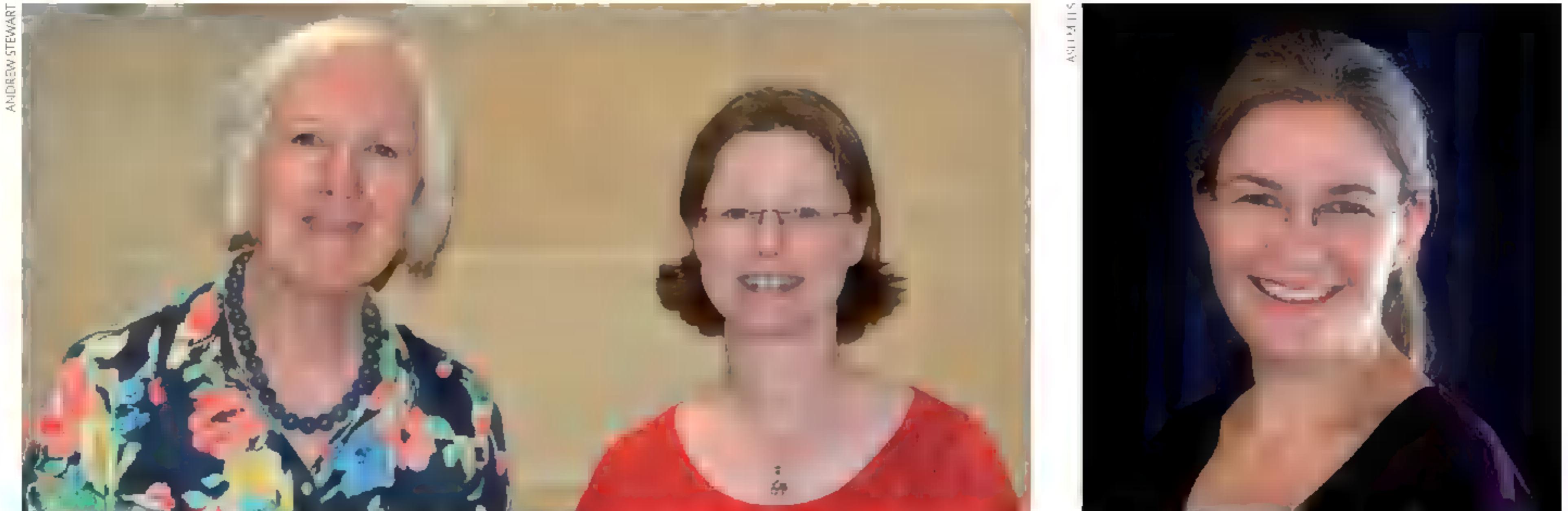
community interest company, Multitude of Voices, the aim of which is 'to support those who are under-represented, marginalised and vulnerable ... through church music.'

While researching music for their service, Stewart was confronted with the invisibility of women in the church music world: 'There are many women composers of church music,

There is a strong element of speaking up for those who can no longer speak up for themselves

train in primary education, and worked with the first girl choristers in Salisbury Cathedral School. Since then, she has remained in music education and the church, and has engaged in social justice work within her community. Her passion for this evolved alongside her

but they are less easy to find, because they don't yet appear on the shelf.' Stewart and Sparkhall were driven by the realisation that women were 'grossly under-represented', as was the future for the girl choristers they have worked with. Having moved to ▶



▲ (l) Dame Judith Weir with project curator Louise Stewart: Stewart stresses the importance of including well-established living composers in the anthology; (r) Stewart's collaborator Olivia Sparkhall: the pair were spurred into action ■ International Women's Day 2016



▲ The cover art was designed by Caroline Grint

« Salisbury 25 years ago to work in a ground-breaking environment, Stewart has become increasingly aware that for these singers today 'the church music they come across does not reflect the roles that they, as middle-aged women, have in their society.' Sparkhall has acknowledged the stark reality that in her local cathedral, the cathedral choirs have not sung anything composed by a woman in the last five years.

The *Anthology of Sacred Music by Women Composers* aims to celebrate women's gifts of composition and fulfil the need for women to see themselves reflected in church music, while at the same time 'setting people up as role models' for younger generations. The youngest featured composer is Joanna Ward, ■ 21-year-old Cambridge graduate, who, thanks to an alphabetised content, will be beside Judith Weir in the anthology. Stewart believes this is one of the benefits of creating a hard-copy, as people will discover new music simply as a result of being exposed to work on the adjacent page: 'She might be the next Judith Weir, and now she might have ■ better chance.'

Ward believes strongly in the powerful impact of the anthology: 'Projects that let women work together for each other will ultimately be what allows us to break away from the current model of composing success, which ultimately keeps individualised women composers as a novelty among the male norm of composing, silencing the rest of us.' It is this silencing that Multitude of Voyces are working hard to undo, while also acknowledging that it is not the case that female composers cannot speak for themselves. Rather, they intend to produce something that is 'greater than all its parts'.

Referring to the current lack of resources available on the shelves and the gap this anthology will fill, Judith Weir said, 'I sometimes get the impression that, where contemporary music is concerned, church musicians don't know where to begin looking; this will be a place to start the exploration.'

Incorporating 55 works across three volumes, Stewart is aware that the anthology is 'only a fraction of what we could do' as there is enough content spanning the last 1,000 years for endless numbers of volumes. They have chosen the works carefully, ensuring that each volume can be used across the church year and that an overview of texts is offered. 'There's an element of not giving people an excuse, and a strong element of giving people lots of choice of difficulty.' As well as a variety of music, Stewart is acutely aware of the importance of maintaining a high quality of composition within the anthology. As the project is the first of its kind, 'if the music in the book is

sub-standard, the message given would not be that the book is sub-standard, but that women are sub-standard.' Therefore, they are not only introducing choirs to emerging talent and unpublished historical works, but have also included the likes of Judith Weir and Judith Bingham, along with June Nixon, the Australian organist-composer and the anthology's oldest living contributor.

For Stewart, as undoubtedly for many, it seems remarkable that we have reached 2019 before anyone has thought to question the status quo. 'One of the reasons this hasn't been done before is because it does not come without challenge,' she explains, admitting that 'not all of this project has been a happy experience.' They have been unable to find a publisher who will go beyond the stage of acknowledging that the anthology is a good idea. As a result, they are self-publishing and self-funding with the added injection of sponsorship from supporters of the project, such as Sarah MacDonald, director of music at Selwyn College, Cambridge. Although the support from these individuals has been 'enormous', there is only a hint of irony in Stewart's tone when she says, 'If I were producing a book about the orchids of South America, I probably would have got more interest.'

From the dismissal of women's church music as 'niche' to the words 'I don't need women, I've got girls', the project has provoked a misogyny that Stewart feels is openly present within the church and would not be acceptable in an institution such as the council or government. It is 'allowed to happen because women remain hidden from

our bookshelves. Once you are represented, people can't get away with those kinds of attitudes.'

Stewart's husband, Andrew, a professional counter-tenor who is very much involved in the project, poses what he calls 'the male point of view'. He suggests that some have questioned the necessity of the anthology because women are already represented in the church, as priests and in the front rows of choirs, so why should men be excluded? The opinion might be that one does not need to be negative about men to be positive about women. 'But of course,' Andrew explains, 'they are simply wrong. You only have to do the practical element of actually finding the music, and it's not there.' Besides, while the originators of the music are female, the text, translation and editing in the anthology have been carried out by both men and women.

The creators and supporters of the anthology believe that this project pushes

boundaries in a way that extends beyond the confines of the church: 'There is a strong element of speaking up for those who can no longer speak up for themselves, and that is a very important tool for readjusting our perspective on the past.' They hope that once the anthologies are printed, the books will generate their own interest, both through social media and word of mouth. Having pre-sold 540 copies (at the time of interviewing) on trust alone, this optimism seems justified. Engagement with young people is a key part of this interest, as it tends to be the younger demographic who notice and question these inequalities in society.

Next year, International Women's Day on 8 March falls on a Sunday, meaning that 'the church, universally, has very little excuse.' Multitude of Voyces are working to ensure that all three volumes are published by this date. The anthologies will launch on Tuesday 17 November 2019 at Evensong at Selwyn College, led by Sarah MacDonald. Works will

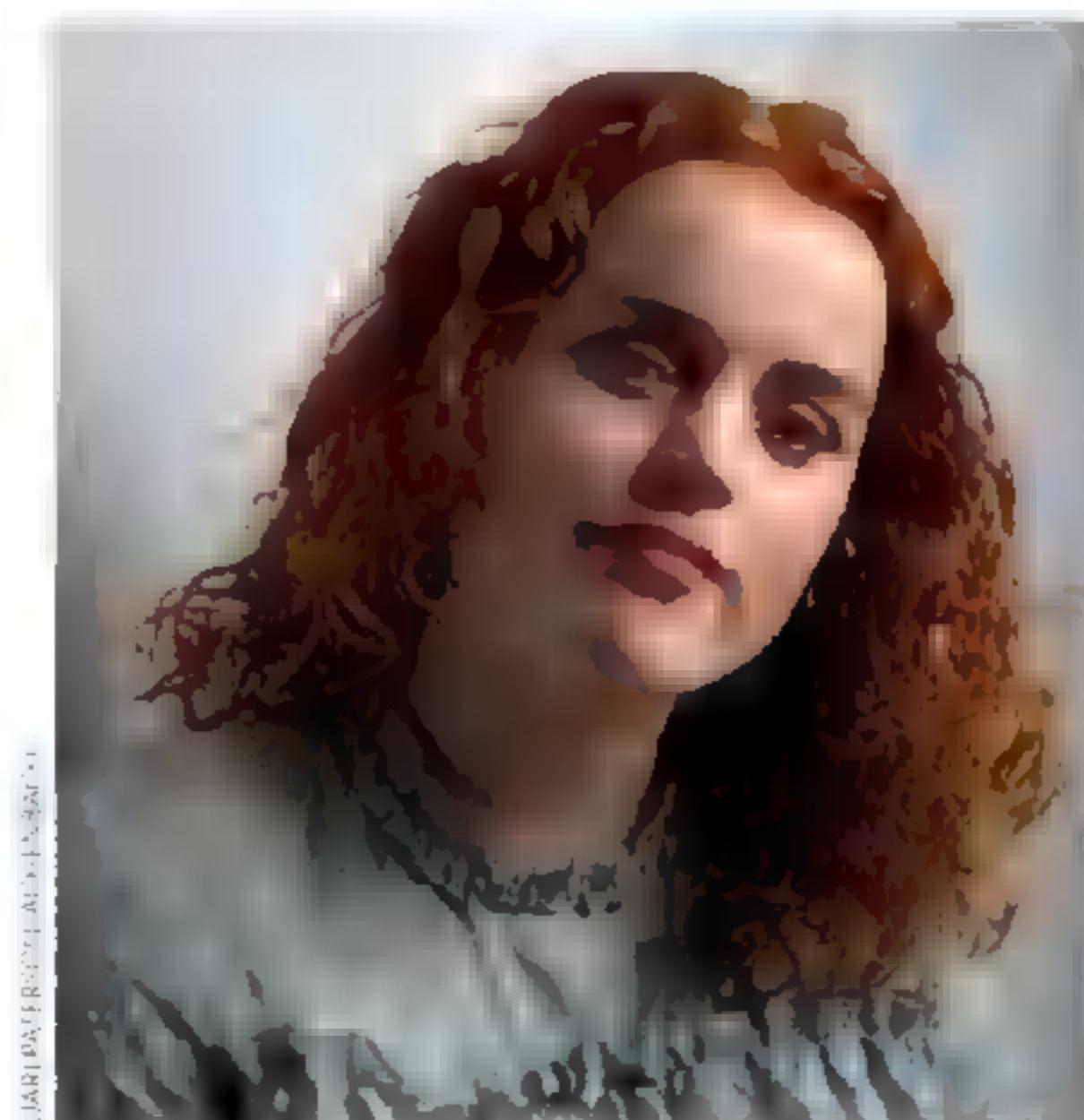
be performed from all three volumes, but only the first volume, *SATB Anthems*, will be available for sale by that time.

Funds from the anthology will be used towards their next social entrepreneurial project, the Makaton Mass, which endeavours to produce a resource pack for churches to hold a eucharistic service for those with cognitive impairments who might use Makaton sign language as their main form of communication. This virtuous circle is a significant part of Multitude of Voyces's *raison d'être*.

The hope is that eventually it will be 'completely normal' for a new anthology to be filled half-and-half with male and female composers, with a mixture of texts and translations. This project seems to be a giant leap in the right direction. ■

The three volumes include SATB Anthems, Upper Voices Anthems and Liturgical Works. multitudeofvoices.co.uk @MulofVoy

† (clockwise, from below) Judith Bingham, Joanna Ward, Anna Semple, Ethel Smyth, Cecilia McDowall, Alison Willis, and Janet Wheeler, are **some** of the 22 **composers** represented in the anthology





Work in progress

Things are humming at the Noack Organ Company, which celebrates its 60th anniversary next year. But at their workshop, **Jonathan Ambrosino** senses not so much tremendous urgency as a genial passage through the day's work... PHOTOS COURTESY THE NOACK ORGAN COMPANY

Located 30 miles north of Boston, in Georgetown, Massachusetts, the Noack Organ Company works is housed in an 1850s two-storey brick schoolhouse, with an erecting shed added in the 1970s. This is not a fancy, purpose-built structure, but a homegrown endeavour that now feels comfy and worn in. The upper storey contains offices and the room for

fine work (action, electrics). The ground floor houses the wood shop and break area. The erecting room has a loft area for pipe preparation and voicing, which in itself reflects the firm's ethos. Other organ shops have enclosed voicing rooms, climate-controlled and soundproofed; Noack's voicing jack is in the open, the pipes speaking into the erecting space and its varying acoustics.

Didier Grassin's tenure as president at Noack has already covered an interesting mix of new work and rehabilitations, each welcoming collaboration. When Church of the Incarnation, Dallas, sought to reframe their 1994 instrument (see *The Noack Organ Company – how it all began*, p.64), Grassin persuaded them to return to Noack for a rebuild, retaining the strong points

while reworking elements that experience had proved less successful. Similar tenets guided Noack's 2018 rehabilitation and relocation of their Opus 111 (1989) for Saint Paul's Chapel, New York (Trinity Wall Street's second church, five blocks away). The principal choruses and flutes were effective, the Swell reeds and foundations perhaps less so. Noack re-engineered the instrument into an 1802 case, which originally housed a George Pike England organ and had been later expanded. Now subtly modified again, and freshly piped in gold leaf, the case looks better than ever. With a new swell box, several new reeds, and some tonal rebalancing, the organ has its own rejuvenated identity.

In each instance, veteran Noack voicer David Rooney joined with freelancer Jean Sebastien Dufour (formerly of Casavant), a wizard with reeds. The collaborative aspect

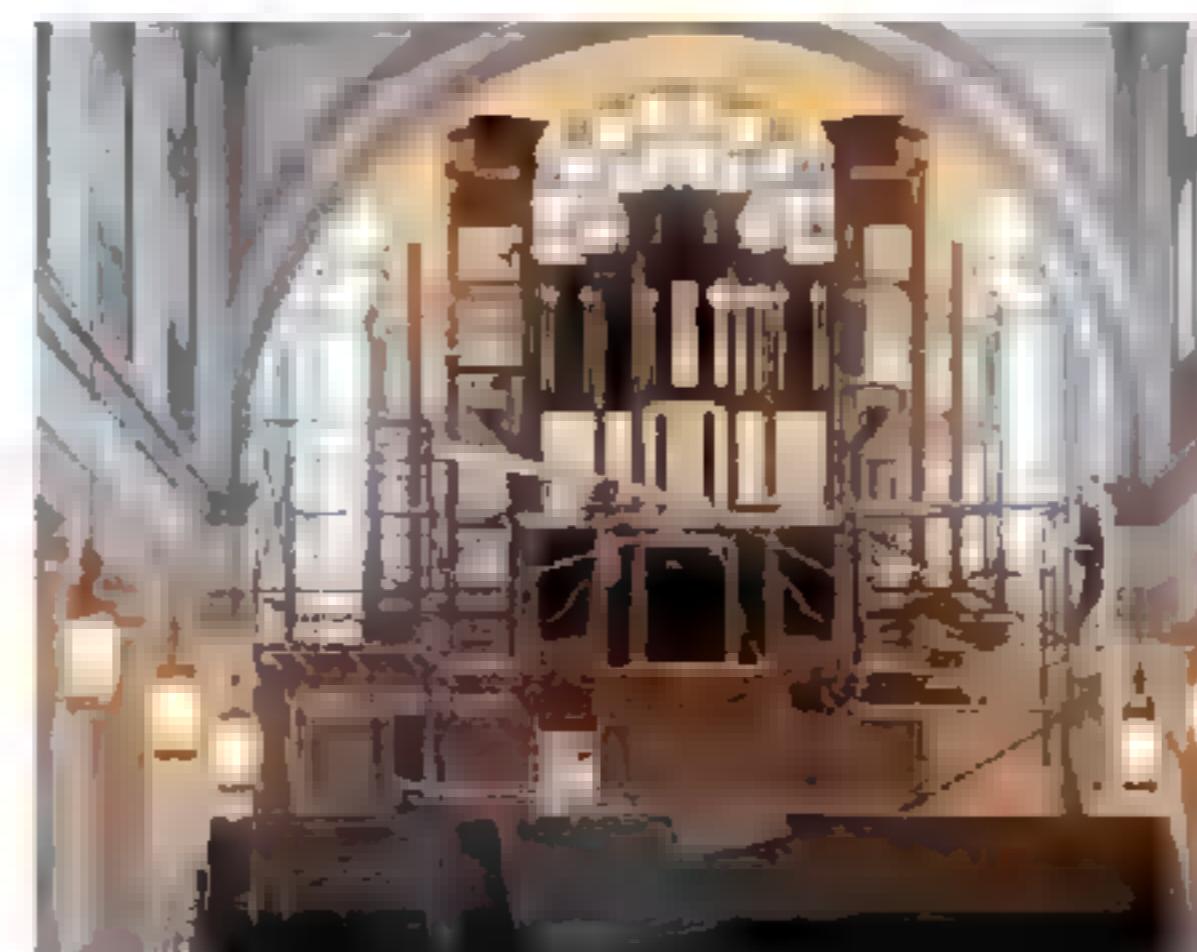
is greater still with recent projects for St Anthony's Church, Davenport, Iowa (2017), and St Peter's Church on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. (2019), each involving the French builder Bertrand Cattiaux. The 16-stop Iowa organ is Noack's first modern essay in an either/or type of instrument, in which one manual's worth of stops is made selectively available on two keyboards. Washington is a proper three-manual, with 42 stops, whose casework conceals a devilishly difficult site. Two east-west masonry walls, initially thought removable, turned out to be holding up the church's west wall. When it was established that the walls had to remain, Grassin re-engineered his initial designs, see-sawing the instrument around the obstacles.

Musically, the Washington organ aimed to break new ground. Director of music Kevin O'Brien wanted something unlike



► ■ Company president Didier Grassin

■ Opus 162 for St Peter's Church on Capitol Hill, Washington D.C.: (opposite) Dean Smith makes the tower caps; (this page, clockwise from below) the finished tower caps; ▶ Eric Kenney racks the reeds; Bertrand Cattiaux listens and makes notes on the voicing; installation in Washington; Nami Hamada voices the Great Trumpet



The Noack Organ Company – how it all began



▲ Company founder-director Fritz Noack in 1968; for the first 25 years he built neo-classical tracker organs, broadening out to encompass electric action in the 1990s

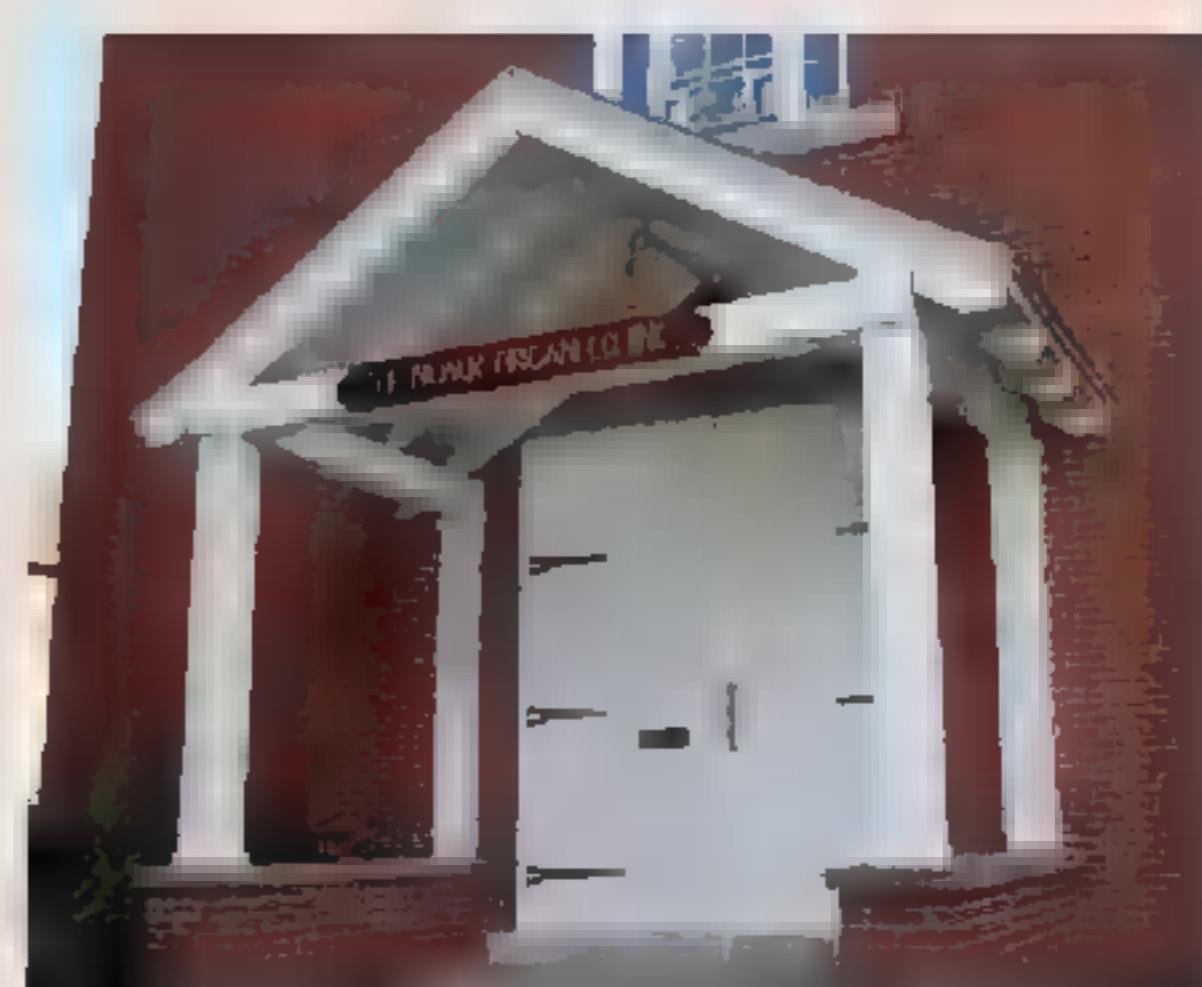
Founded in 1960, the shop was established by Fritz Noack, who trained at Beckerath from 1954 to 1958. Noack arrived in the US in the autumn of 1959 and worked a few months at the Estey Organ Company, in Brattleboro, Vermont. A fellow worker suggested that he get in touch with Charles Fisk, who invited him to join in restoring a Snetzler. Noack set up his own shop in 1960.

Noack's first 25 years saw a string of modern movement tracker organs in neo-classic style, increasingly within cases of historic character. Tonal change came in a sideways manner, after a 1982 restoration of the four-manual 1864 E. & G.G. Hook in Mechanics Hall, Worcester, Massachusetts (America's first town hall with an American-built concert organ). Soon, within Noack's

neo-classic brew could be found Great Second Diapasons and Swell Cornopeans, though voiced through a neo-classic filter. In the economic downturn of the late 1980s and early 90s, necessity caused Noack to broaden, building his first electric-action organ in decades in 1994 for Church of the Incarnation, Dallas (reusing much of the church's former 1960 Aeolian-Skinner). This job, however, remained an outlier in a steady stream of mechanical-action instruments, 160 in all under Fritz Noack's lead.

Didier Grassin joined the company in 2011 and became president in January 2015. A native of Poitiers, France, Grassin has held significant positions at N.P. Mander and Casavant, at other times working as a freelance designer. The sound and feel

of today's Noack increasingly reflect an ethos Grassin encourages. Ideas, approach and sensibility matter as much as any rigid aesthetic. While each worker has a particular speciality, generalism is the touchstone, as befits a nine-person team.



◀ anything else in the District's interesting stable of instruments installed over the past two decades. This approach tallied with Cattiaux's notion of trying to fuse elements of Cavaillé-Coll's earlier style into a stoplist of more modern framework, with an enclosed Choir and some Pedal borrows. This mechanical-action instrument sits in an oak case high in the rear gallery of a resonant church, and is the first Noack organ to embody the voicing talent of Nami Hamada (a conservatory-trained organist who spent 19 years working at C.B. Fisk) in collaboration with Bertrand Cattiaux from France, and David Rooney at Noack. The organ was brought into use at Easter, and is being dedicated on 14 November by Philippe Lefebvre from Notre-Dame in Paris.

Meanwhile, the shop team is finalising the next instrument, for Our Lady of Refuge (Catholic) in Orchard Lake, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit. This no-frills two-manual

has 15 stops with five more prepared, in a spare Modern Movement case in keeping with the church's architecture. This organ is intended to play for Christmas.

Probably the biggest news at Noack, however, is the instrument just now getting started in the shop, and one of their largest ever: a 56-voice three-manual for the Cathedral of St Paul (Catholic) in Birmingham, Alabama. It is the Washington scheme fleshed out, with 32ft flue and reed, and greater comprehensiveness in the supporting departments. It represents a conclusive transition to the new Noack, Grassin's vision fully evolved. Cattiaux, the collaborator who guided the Washington project, now takes a secondary position, as Hamada drives the tonal vision, with Rooney supporting. But it is Grassin at the helm, less an engineer of the locomotive than a genial conductor ensuring all is harmonious. ■

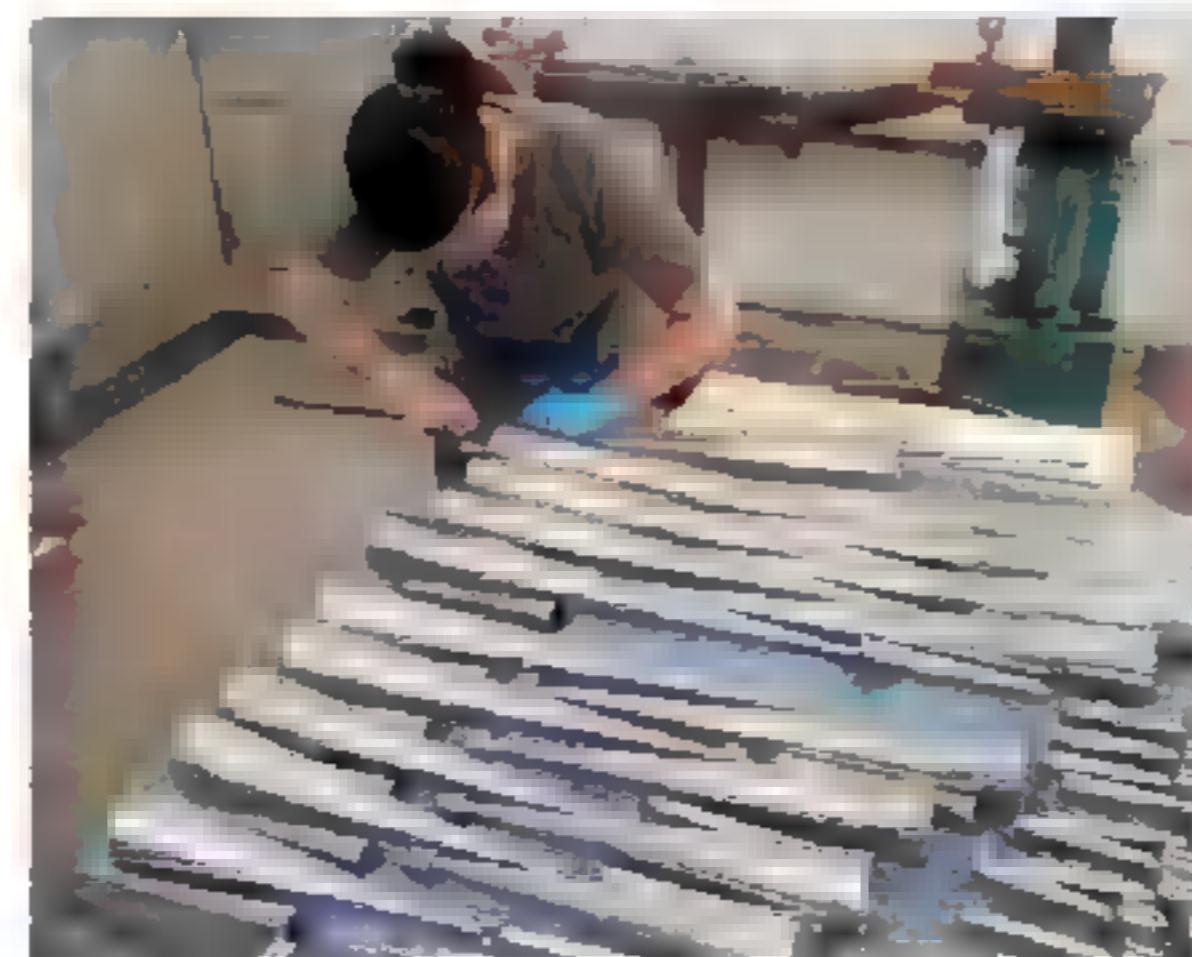
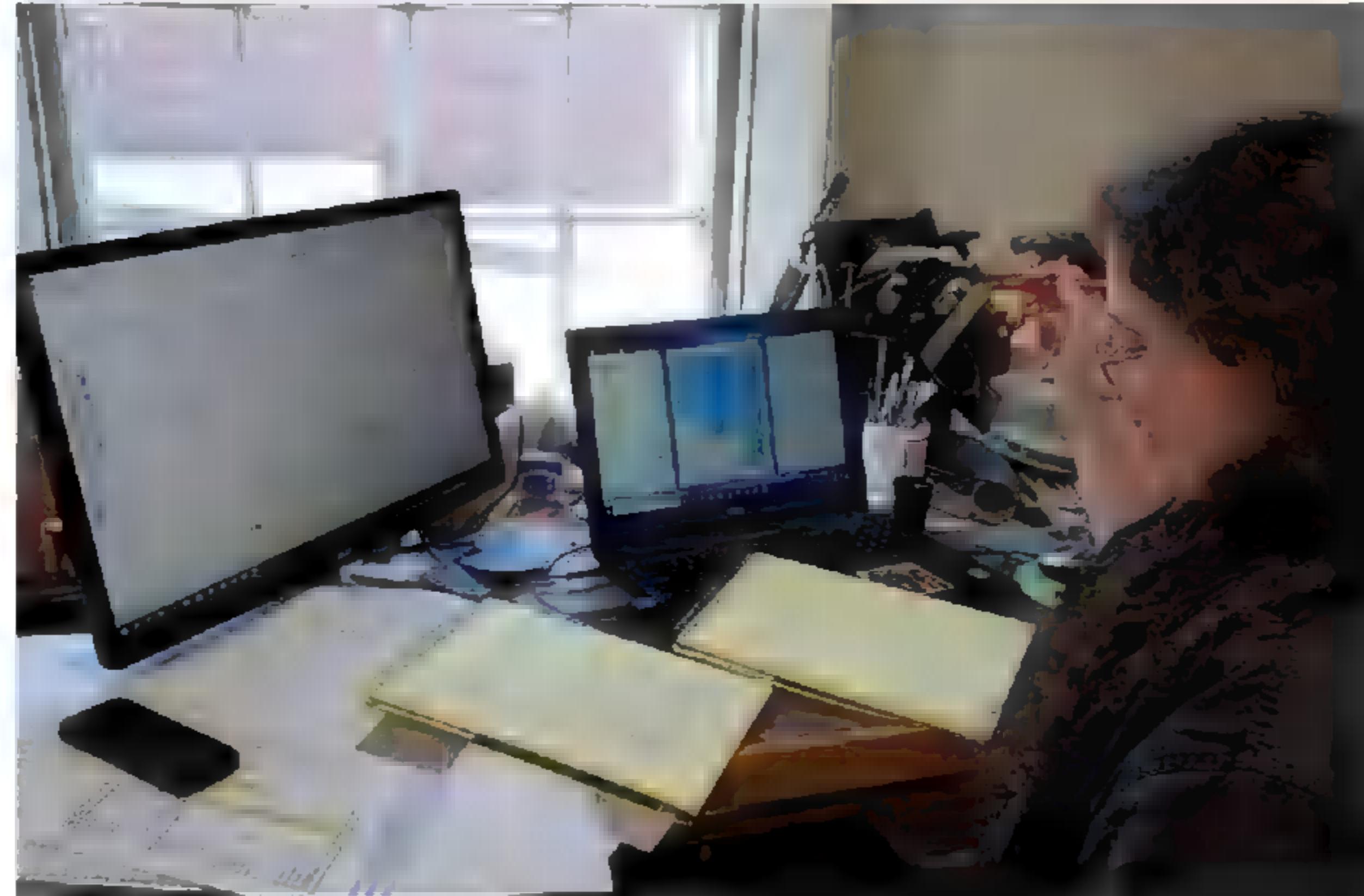
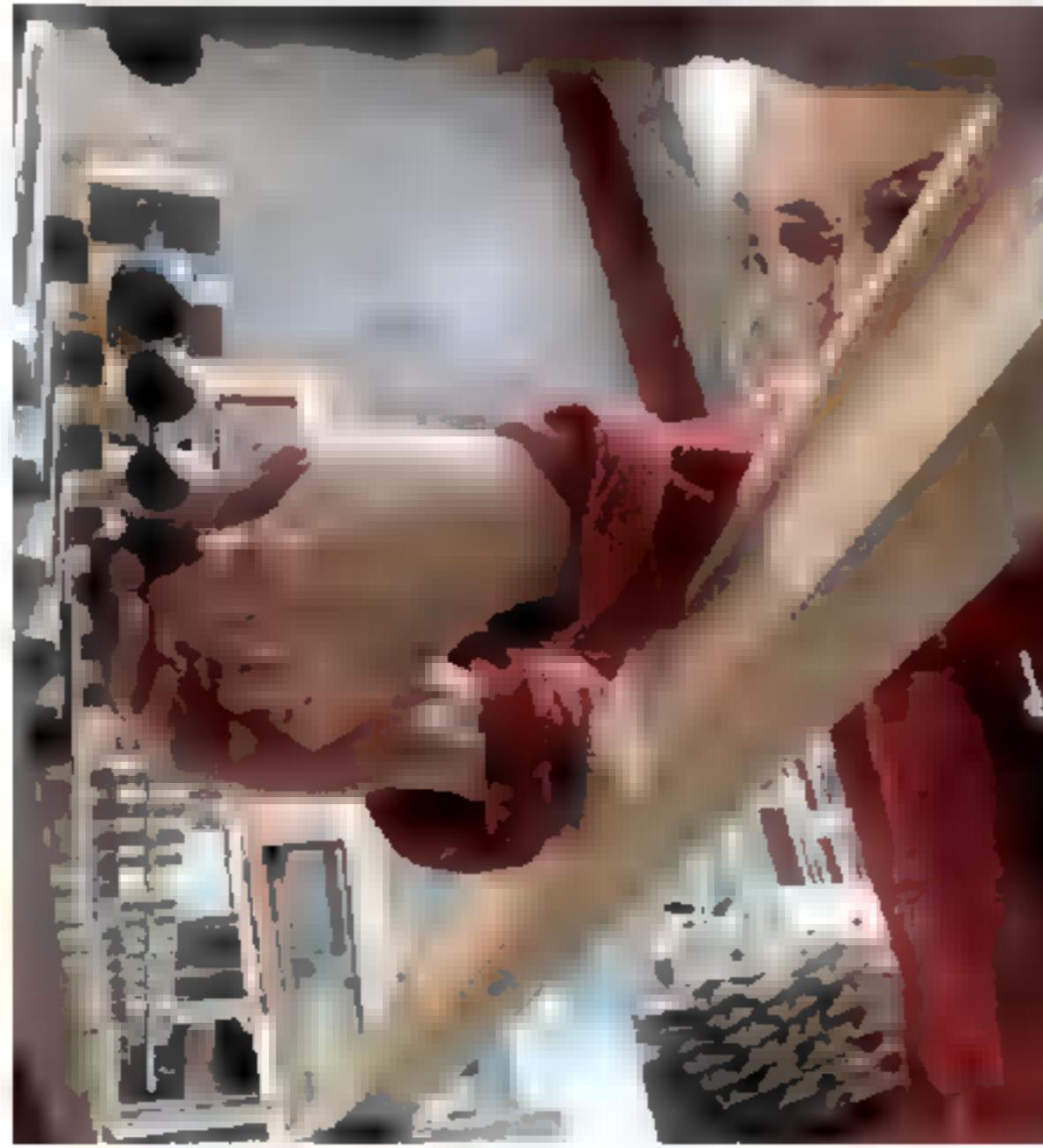


▲ The team take a well-earned break

Noack Opus 162 for St Peter's on Capitol Hill, Washington D.C., will be dedicated by Philippe Lefebvre on 14 November at 7pm. www.saintpetersdc.org; www.noackorgan.com

*Jonathan Ambrosino is a Boston-based tuner-technician, who works nationally as a consultant and tonal finisher. He has written for *Choir & Organ* since 1998.*

■ (anti-clockwise, from below) Work on Opus 163 for Orchard Lake progresses, showing Elsa Nelson adjusting the pedalboard; pallet springs; Nami Hamada preparing the Swell Trumpet; and Eric Kenney cutting felt for the façade pipes; and Mary Beth DiGenova designing Noack's latest project, Opus 164 for Birmingham, Alabama





Recorded delivery

Launching a record label at the start of what has proved an economically unstable decade was a risk – but Convivium Records has weathered the storms. Founder and managing director Adrian Green talks to Helen Cocks

Adrian Green first became fascinated by recording while a choral scholar at Royal Holloway, University of London. Intending to become a professional singer, he found himself singing in recording sessions with two of the big beasts of the industry, Naxos and Hyperion – an experience that had a major impact on him, as he recalls: ‘It was amazing to see how you could take something performed once and actually make it better through a strategy and a method, then take [the result] and share it with a wider audience.’

After graduating, Green went to Portsmouth Cathedral as a choral scholar (he remains there now as a lay clerk) where he developed his nascent interest in recording, encouraged by Cathedral organist David Price; and in 2009 he took his first steps into the recording world by making a disc with the Portsmouth Cathedral Choir, conducted by Price. Soon afterwards, Green formally launched his label and *Sing to the Lord* became Convivium Records’ catalogue number CR001.

The next step was a project with Green’s other venture of the time, the Convivium Singers. Green founded the group in 2009 with conductor Alexander Norman as ‘a group of young, aspiring professional singers that really had places to go,’ and later that year they recorded their debut album at

Portsmouth Cathedral. They then went on to feature on multiple releases for the label over the next decade, alongside public performances and appearances at major classical music festivals and competitions across Europe.

With his focus now on recording, Green set about developing a label based around a core of his specialism – choral music – but still exploring other projects as they presented themselves. Early artists included the choirs Discantvs and the Hogan Ensemble, but also the pianist Jonathan Powell, playing new music by British composer John White, and a disc of music by Rob Keeley, performed by the Fidelio Trio and flautist Rowland Sutherland.

Convivium runs on an artist-led footing, with most projects beginning when an artist, group or composer approaches Green with an idea for a project. Green then sees his role as an experienced guiding hand, discerning what the artist is looking to achieve with a recording and advising them accordingly – and robustly if necessary: ‘What your client tells you they want, might not be what they actually need. You have to be honest with them. For example, some composers might say, “I want to record this so that I can be famous and it’ll be on Classic FM”, but what they actually need in the short term is for their music to be published and performed; this is more important than their being played on radio.’

Sometimes, the advice to artists can be that there is no mileage in a commercial

■ George Richford conducts Romsey Abbey Choir as they record *The Tudor Choir Book vol.2* [CR040]



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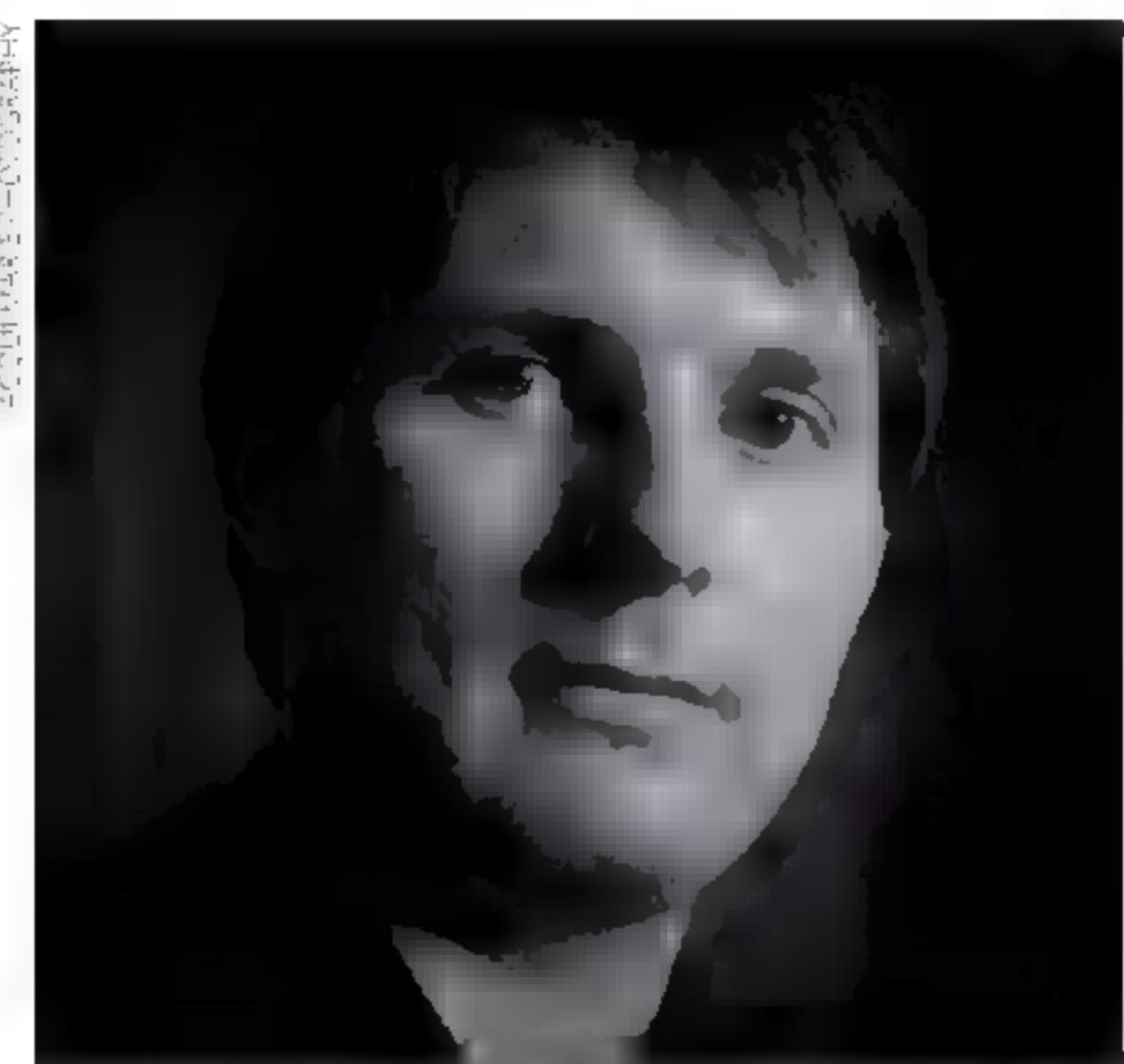
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JACOB NAPOLI PHOTOGRAPHY

▲ 'Singers with places to go': the Convivium Singers, founded by Adrian Green in 2009



■ Convivium founder-director Adrian Green

◀ recording – but that does not mean that Convivium's involvement in the project is over. As well as functioning as a traditional record label with a catalogue to promote, Convivium is also a service, providing a producing and editing team for hire to groups such as schools, who are looking to make a private recording that might sell just to parents, or to the community for charity. Green is clear that he takes quality just as seriously for amateurs as for professionals, making sure that Convivium provides an excellent service and value for money – which does not mean doing things on the cheap, but explaining carefully to the client why the recommendations he is making will give appropriate results for their needs. He feels that his early days with the label when he 'did everything and realised just how hard all those jobs are' have paid dividends in an in-depth knowledge of the process. For

example, a client might not consider artwork important, but Green knows it can make the difference in a disc cutting through a crowded market.

Alongside those recordings which Green advises not releasing commercially, there are those which began life as private projects but whose quality convinces Green to take them into the Convivium catalogue. He speaks enthusiastically of one project with the amateur Cathedral Singers of Christ Church Oxford, who recorded newly edited music by a 17th-century dean of that college, Henry Aldrich. Green admits to being pleasantly surprised by both the quality of the music,

and reinvesting everything we can into organically developing a company which is about people, ideas and ambition rather than about profits and bottom lines.' Is there anything he wouldn't release? 'A few years ago, I was asked to release a recording on which some of the music was emotionally quite dark, and I asked myself, "Is this something I would endorse? Is this something that's going to be positive for the world, if I share it?" I came to the conclusion that this was not something that I could be proud to say I stand for. I'm not a record manager to release things which are negative or contrived or have some sort of devious

'I want to reinvest everything we can into developing a company that is about people, ideas and ambition'

which he describes as 'really solid', and the performance, and Convivium will release the disc in November [CR052]. The music's editor will also be providing the performing editions online free of charge alongside the recording, so what began as a private project will now have a much wider life.

Green is open about the fact that he did not start Convivium Records to make money, employing an almost not-for-profit model: 'Our entire reputation as a label is about enabling and empowering, so in a way my interest is about making ends meet, rather than making money,

agenda. That might make money and it might be commercial, but it also reflects on us, our values and who we are.'

Convivium's reputation obviously matters to Green. He speaks of being known for respecting artists, not exploiting them, for treating everyone in the industry with courtesy, and he lists Convivium's values as 'openness, generosity and honesty'. Through this, Green builds good relationships with up-and-coming artists who will stick with the label as their profiles grow; but the approach is obviously also a personal mission for Green. He speaks openly of his ▶



▲ The Nonsuch Singers, who recently recorded Will Todd's *Mass in Blue* for Convivium [CR047]

◀ high regard for the musicians Convivium works with, of his awe at the craft of John Mark Ainsley, and his pride at recording the great counter-tenor James Bowman singing all his favourite music at the end of his career.

Convivium has come a long way in 10 years, but Green still has a lot of ambition for the label. He has this year negotiated with Naxos physical distribution deals in the UK, US and Canada, and digital distribution worldwide, which means being able to offer prospective artists a wider audience. Having fairly recently taken a foray into the larger works in the repertoire with a recording of Mozart's Requiem with Winchester College Chapel Choir and the London Mozart Players, Green now mentions Handel's *Messiah* and Mendelssohn's *Hymn of Praise* as target projects, as well as admitting an aspiration to record some opera. And the steps outside the choral repertoire that

Convivium has taken thus far have been surefooted: one of the label's greatest artistic successes (although, as Green admits, not ■ triumph commercially) has been composer James Erber's music for solo flute, played by Matteo Cesari, released in 2013, which received glowing reviews in *Gramophone*, *La Folia* and the *Sunday Times*. Green now aspires to expanding the label's small but growing selection of song and solo piano discs.

Green was anxious from the start not to run before he could walk, and 10 years on he continues to grow Convivium organically, rather than taking big risks, saying, 'It's hard to see the bigger picture but you can always see the next step.' He has spent his first decade at Convivium with his hand very much to the plough, and clearly feels a personal responsibility for the quality of what comes out in the label's name. But now, as things get busier, it seems that Green

trusts his hand-picked team to manage projects without him, leaving him time to work on strategy. He is characteristically non-commercially minded when it comes to the challenges posed by the digital music revolution, pointing out that if your primary concern is getting your music to a wider audience, rather than making money, then streaming can only be a good thing. 'Ultimately,' he says, 'I would like Convivium Records to be a well-established, well-respected label, known for being honest with their artists and supporting them, even if it means that as a label they make less money. Primarily the reward is in helping people to reach ■ wider audience, to broaden their own horizons and their perspective on what is realistically achievable. ■

www.conviviumrecords.co.uk

Helen Cocks is a London-based writer with a particular interest in choral music.





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David Hill answers your questions about all matters relating to choirs and their conductors

My sight-reading is weak. This doesn't matter so much in tonal works, where the part is memorable, but I really struggle with a lot of 20th-century music. Is there any way I can improve my ability in this area?

This is a question most singers will ask at some stage. There are no magic answers as we come to terms with our own strengths and weaknesses. Ultimately, it is about understanding and assimilating the challenges of sight-singing with regular practice and assessment. Any improvements will be the result of a willingness to get to grips with the complex relationship between what you see on the page and how it should

▼ Regular singing in choirs will help to improve sight-reading



sound: that is the equation. So, how can we begin to find answers?

Very few of us will become physically fitter by just thinking about it – and wouldn't it be wonderful if that were the case? Taking this analogy further, to be skilled in any field of sport requires training that is both precise and focused – and which will motivate the person to hone the necessary skills in addition to being physically fit.

Is this true for singing? It certainly is if it's going to be your profession; but no matter where you sing, some knowledge of how the voice works is something all singers and conductors should be keen to acquire. **Singing is a muscular activity:** understanding the close relationship between how a sound is made and how it feels within your body are important factors in creating an aspect of 'pitch memory'.

I have long advocated the notion that every music student in college or university should learn how to sight-sing, as it requires far more than merely placing a finger on a key or string. All music needs to be understood as 'vocal' in its broadest sense. To know how it should be sung is to know how it should be played. I have never ceased to be amazed (and alarmed) at the number of brilliant instrumentalists unable to pitch basic intervals. It is a vital aspect of thinking and understanding music notation.

► Singers, of all types, might want to avail themselves of material which is readily available on the internet to assist them in

improving their reading. Treat it like an online language improvement course, developing the skills at a rate that is comfortable.

- Find a teacher or friend who can help in the process by extra instruction or just working through sections of music together, on both pitch and rhythms.
- Acquire a very basic keyboard, or even just an App on your phone, so that when you are practising – and if you don't have a piano available – you can check on how you are getting on by using the App. I worked with a superb singer recently who was drafted in at very short notice into a recording session for massively complex solos, and used the App and an ear-piece to brilliant effect throughout the sessions.
- Most successful reading is about understanding the music intervals, how they look and sound. The more time you can devote to these, the quicker the improvements – it is all about practice, as it is when speaking another language.
- Rhythmic knowledge can easily be neglected when discussing sight-singing. An understanding of the basic elements and how they work is important and, once again, the internet will help in an interesting and, if you want, interactive way.

There is no doubt that regular singing in choirs will, in itself, improve the mental assimilation of sound or 'sight-reading'. For some, like in languages, it is a quick and painless process; for most of us, it is more challenging. As I hear around 200 individual auditions a year, I am aware of the huge differences in ability, often the result of educational opportunities or the lack of them. What I'm totally certain about is that anyone who has a voice and can pitch accurately is able to sight-read. The answer to the equation is 'time and effort!' Good luck! ■

David Hill is musical director of The Bach Choir and Leeds Philharmonic Society, principal conductor of Yale Schola Cantorum, and associate guest conductor of Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra.

Do you have any questions relating to choral direction and singing? Send them to David Hill via the editor: maggie.hamilton@markallengroup.com



Graeme Kay on the attractions of Scotland's 'other' Iona...

PHOTOS COURTESY GRAEME KAY

In the 1960s, before cheap foreign holidays lured the Glasgow workforce away from its traditional 'Fair Fortnight' holiday destinations such as Blackpool and the Clyde estuary resorts of Largs, Dunoon and Rothesay, pleasure steamers of the Caledonian Steam Packet Company still sailed 'doon the watter' from the city's Broomielaw wharf, criss-crossing the river's lower reaches – Gourock, Helensburgh, Kilcreggan, Wemyss

Bay – down to Brodick on the Isle of Arran, Ardrossan, Ayr, Campbeltown on the Mull of Kintyre, and up to Inveraray at the head of Loch Fyne.

Among those favoured watering-holes was Millport, Isle of Cumbrae, a settlement which owed its origins in the 1700s to the people who attempted to smuggle contraband into the Clyde and to those who tried to stop them. Although less than two miles off the

Ayrshire coast, back then the geographical separation between Cumbrae and the mainland involved a half-hour journey from Largs, typically on the town's resident, much-loved fast steamer *Talisman*, the world's first diesel-electric paddle vessel. The Clyde puffer *Saxon*, which starred as *The Vital Spark* in the TV adaptation of Neil Munro's 'Para Handy' tales, shipped supplies of coal and bulk goods to Millport Pier. Daytrippers would swarm ashore from *Talisman*, the CSPCo's other paddlers *Caledonia* and *Waverley*, and the elegant turbine steamers *Duchess of Hamilton*, *Duchess of Montrose*, and *Queen Mary II*.

Visitors' typical destinations – apart from the pubs – were Newton Sands, the authentic 1950s-style Ritz Café which served ice-cold bottles of Coca-Cola, milky coffee, hot peas, and Italian ice-cream with, um, 'tallys' blood' (raspberry sauce), the children's entertainments at the Garrison (built in 1745 as a barracks and subsequently the home of the Earl of Glasgow), the fearsomely painted 'Crocodile Rock', Mapes's toy and bicycle hire shop, catering for the essential Millport experience of the one-hour cycle ride around the island's perimeter road, and the three jetties where fishing trips departed and the better-heeled could hire self-drive motor boats which put-putted around the bay in a distinctive summer susurration. Some of these attractions have survived into the 21st century.

My family was fortunate enough to own a small flat above a bakery on the seafront; as a clergy household, we didn't have the funds for holidays anywhere else, so Millport was a childhood haven for six weeks in the summer, where I learned to swim, ride a bike, skim stones, row a boat, and eventually sail. My elder brother and I occupied a bunk bed at the front of the flat. Apart from one memorable summer of frustration and lamentation because he was being forced by Lenzie Academy to read *Martin Chuzzlewit* on his school holidays, for me the madeleine-in-the-cup-of-coffee trigger memories are still the sounds of quiet, windless and occasionally sunny Sunday mornings: the waves gently lapping the beach, the low burr of the generators on the steamer at its overnight berth, the swish of the scuffie's [road sweeper's] broom. After breakfast, we would 'hae a guid hing oot' of our windows as there was usually a church parade: the Boys' Brigade would march to one of Millport's

▼ Cumbrae: views to Bute and Arran





■ Inside Butterfield's Cathedral of the Isles; (right) the Cathedral and its buildings

Presbyterian churches, behind Millport Pipe Band. They only favoured one tune, so a lot of the parade consisted of the side-drums' 'tup... tup... tup... tup...' between short blasts of bagpipe.

But we didn't join the Sunday church parade. As Episcopalians, we turned in the opposite direction and climbed the steep tree-lined path through musty leaf mould to the Cathedral of the Isles, also known as the Collegiate Church of the Holy Spirit (and now billed as 'Britain's smallest working cathedral'), presided over in those days by the revered figure of Dean George James Cosmo Douglas, who looked like Samuel Beckett and clumped around Millport in a black cassock and 'tackety boots'.

The small complex of Cathedral buildings dates from 1851 and was erected at the behest of one of the island's landowners, George Boyle, 6th Earl of Glasgow, a great benefactor of the Scottish Episcopal Church and the diocese of Argyll and The Isles; the Earl's chosen architect was William Butterfield, the Gothic revivalist who built St Ninian's Cathedral in Perth, All Saints Margaret Street, London, and Keble College, Oxford. Originally conceived as an educational and missionary centre, the Cathedral was seen as a 'new' Iona, and in 1876 it was consecrated as Cathedral of the Isles. It has fine examples of richly-coloured encaustic tiles and stained glass windows typical of the Gothic style embraced by the Oxford Movement. The chancel ceiling depicts the island's ferns and wild flowers; symbolism of the Holy Spirit and the Trinity is found repeatedly throughout the Cathedral buildings, inside and out. It has survived many financial and spiritual vicissitudes; today it remains as a retreat and study centre, its economy

boosted by bed-and-breakfast business as well as ministering to the needs of the local Episcopalian congregation.

Since 1969, one of the Cathedral's constants has been the organist, Alastair Chisholm. Barring a decade-long period of involuntary exile when the Scottish Episcopal Church controversially handed the running of the place over to the US-based 'Community of Celebration', Chisholm's long-term commitment to the building had extended way beyond organising the music – realising that the vehicular access to the Cathedral was an obstacle course more suited to the training of army tank drivers, Chisholm

to be a magnificent musical asset to the Cathedral, speaking into the building's warm, resonant acoustics, which the visitor can appreciate in the occasional choral services and in the ongoing concert programmes organised and curated by Chisholm, making full use of the Cathedral's restored Erard and Lipp pianos, the 1976 'Cumbrae' harpsichord, and a recently acquired Bösendorfer concert grand piano, which has further transformed the Cathedral's music-making.

Nowadays, Cumbrae's many historical and more modern attractions can be easily enjoyed, as the island is only a seven-minute ro-ro ferry crossing from Largs,

The Frederick Holt organ continues to be a magnificent musical asset to the Cathedral

decided to raise funds towards a proper tarmac road by undertaking a sponsored row round the nearby island of Bute. Following his retirement from school-teaching, in 2004 Chisholm was determined that the Cathedral should have a pipe organ worthy of the building's unique history to replace its inadequate Compton 3-rank extension organ; having identified a suitable, redundant 1867 Frederick Holt organ built for a church in Edinburgh, Chisholm needed to raise £39,000 to bring the instrument to the island and install it. This he proceeded to do by, *inter alia*, rowing from Millport to Edinburgh via the Forth and Clyde Canal in his 14ft clinker-built dinghy, *Veya*, and by joining an ecumenical team of rowers bent on recreating St Columba's voyage from Ireland to Iona in a 40ft wood-and-canvas curragh.

As rebuilt and restored by Wood of Huddersfield, the II/16 Holt organ continues

with a connecting bus to Millport for foot passengers. The historic Royal George Hotel at the pierhead has lovely rooms, but you can also stay in the peaceful precincts of the Cathedral itself [cathedraloftheisles.org]. You will be right on the spot not only for services, but for occasional visiting choir residencies and a range of activities which in recent months have included an Iconography Workshop, a Guitar Retreat, and Alastair Chisholm's course introducing the music of Hamish MacCunn, Frederic Lamond, and John Blackwood McEwen, who were all born in 1868. The Cathedral runs a full music programme – 'Music for a Summer Afternoon' – from May to September, and in 2020 a highlight will be Gusztáv Fenyő's continuation of his Beethoven piano sonata cycle, in the composer's 250th anniversary year. ■

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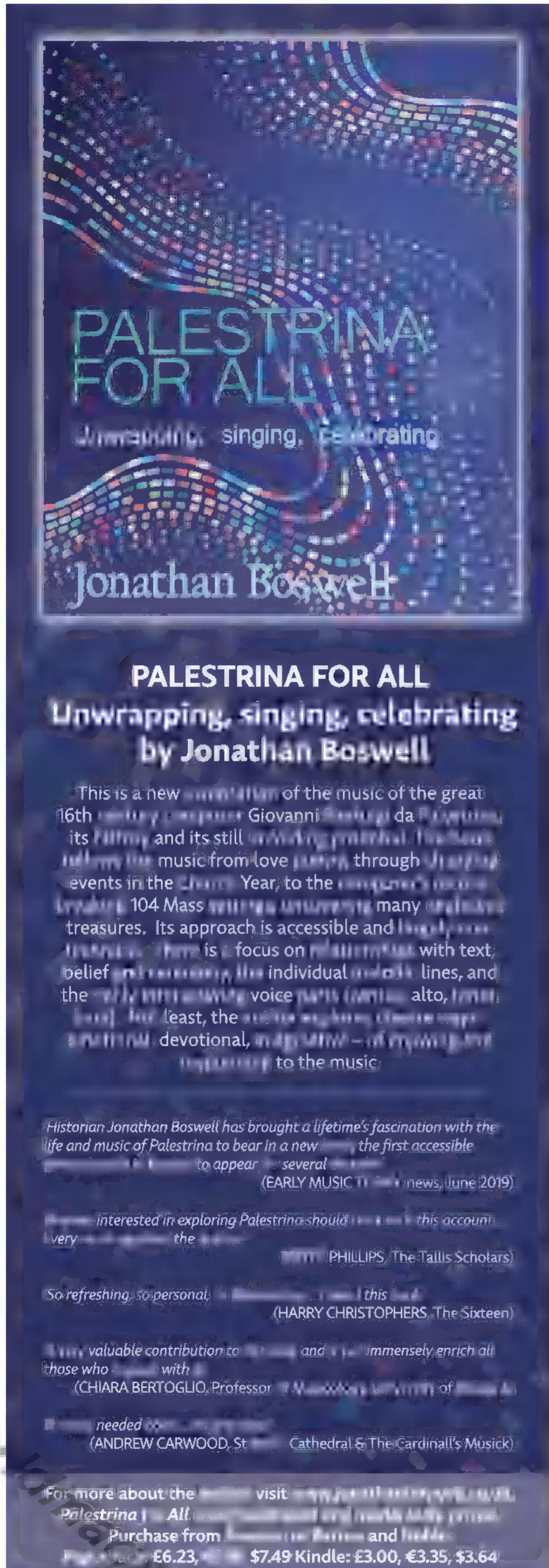
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RECITAL ROUND-UP

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PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

Peter Gould rounds off his musical pilgrimage across the Portsmouth diocese with recitals in St Mary's Fratton and the Cathedral.

St Mary's, a Grade II* listed building, houses a III/38 Walker organ designed in 1888 to complement the new church building; the consultant was George Martin, then organist of St Paul's Cathedral, and the case was designed by church architect R.A. Blomfield.

The Cathedral's III/49 organ was installed in 1994 by Nicholson & Co, using pipes that were originally part of the 1861 John Nicholson organ built for Manchester Cathedral. In 2001, the West Great division (pictured) was installed, and a new Trompete de Maris stop has been added recently.

Gould's 2013-14 organ pilgrimage in the Derby diocese raised £7,000 for charity; by September the Portsmouth venture had raised £1,575 from 44 churches in the diocese. He told *C&O*: 'This sort of thing brings pleasure to local people, who realise that the diocese does care about its parishes and can bring a class of organ playing to country organs that don't normally get that experience ... I am also taking the opportunity to find out the state of musical worship in the parishes.' At the end, Gould will present the Bishop of Portsmouth with a cheque towards his chosen Lent Charity, supporting mental health in the area.

Alton, St Lawrence at 8pm

Tansy Castledine (5 Nov)
01420 543628

Birmingham Cathedral at 1.10pm

Rachel Mahon (4 Nov) 0121 262 1840

Birmingham Town Hall at 1pm

Thomas Trotter (11, 25 Nov)
0121 780 3333

Brighton, The Meeting House, University of Sussex at 12 noon

D'Arcy Trinkwon (26 Nov)
01273 678217

Bristol, The New Room at 1.30pm

Jonathan Price (22 Nov) 0117 9779152

Cambridge, King's College Chapel at 6.40pm

Daniel Hyde (2 Nov), Richard Gowers (9 Nov), Tomé Olives (16 Nov), Margaret Phillips (23 Nov), Christopher Whitton (30 Nov)
01223 746506

Cheltenham College at 1.15pm

Peter King (5 Nov) 01242 265600

Chester Cathedral at 1.10pm

Peter Morris (7 Nov), Brian Heald (14 Nov), John Hosking (21 Nov), Philip Rushforth (28 Nov) 01244 500974

Chichester Cathedral at 1.10pm

Frederick Stocken (12 Nov)
01243 782595

Edinburgh, McEwan Hall at 1.10pm

Morley Whitehead (1 Nov)
0131 651 4336

Edinburgh, Reid Concert Hall at 1.10pm

Douglas Hollick (22 Nov)
0131 651 4336

Edinburgh, St Giles' Cathedral at 6pm

Jordan English (3 Nov) 0131 226 0677

Glasgow University Memorial Chapel at 1.10pm*

Thomas Trotter (6pm, 8 Nov), Kevin Kowalew (13 Nov), William Hutcheson (20 Nov), Sam Prouse (27 Nov)
0141 330 5411

While every effort is made to provide correct information, readers are strongly advised to telephone the numbers given to confirm details before attending.

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Gloucester Cathedral at 7.30pm

Robert Quinney (6 Nov)
01452 528095

Godalming, SS Peter & Paul at 1pm

Martin Ellis (1 Nov) 01483 414135

Hereford Cathedral at 3.05pm*

Peter Dyke (9 Nov; 1.15pm, 30 Nov)
01432 374208

Horsham, St Mary's at 7.30pm

D'Arcy Trinkwon (15 Nov)
01403 741685

Huddersfield Town Hall at 1pm

Gordon Stewart (4, 11 Nov)
01484 221900

Hull City Hall at 12.30pm

Paul Dewhurst (6 Nov) 01482 300306

Ipswich, St Mary-le-Tower at 1.10pm

Martin Ellis (26 Nov) 01473 225610

Lancaster Priory at 10.30am*

Ian Pattinson (2 Nov), Hugh Davies (1.30pm, 13 Nov) 01524 63200

Leeds Minster at 12.30pm

Matthew Blaiden (1 Nov), David Houlder (15 Nov), Paul Dewhurst (22 Nov) 0113 245 2036

Leeds Town Hall at 1.05pm

Darius Battiwalla (4, 18 Nov), Jonathan P. Eyre (11 Nov), John Scott Whiteley (25 Nov) 0113 378 6600

Liverpool, St George's Hall at 12.45pm

Ian Tracey (19 Nov) 0151 225 6909

London E1, Christ Church Spitalfields at 7.30pm

Stephen Farr (25 Nov) 020 7377 2440

London EC2, St Lawrence Jewry at 1pm

Catherine Ennis (5, 12, 19 Nov), James Carpenter (26 Nov)
020 7600 9478

London EC4, St Dunstan-in-the-West at 1.15pm

Jamie Robertson (15 Nov), Martin Ellis (22 Nov), Luke Bond & Tom Lilburn (c-t) (29 Nov) 020 7405 1929

London EC4, St Paul's Cathedral at 4.45pm

Timothy Parsons (3 Nov), Simon Johnson (10 Nov), Witold Zaborný (17 Nov) 020 7651 0898

London N1, Union Chapel at 6.30pm

Anna Lapwood (6 Nov) 020 7226 1686

London SW1, Methodist Central Hall at 3pm

Duncan Middleton (17 Nov)
020 7654 2000

London SW1, Westminster Abbey at 5.45pm

Peter Holder (3 Nov), Richard Gowers (10 Nov), James Gough (17 Nov), Benjamin Cunningham (24 Nov)
020 7222 5152

London SW1, Westminster Cathedral at 7.30pm

Nine organists (20 Nov) (see News, p.6) 020 7798 9057

London SW19, Sacred Heart Church at 8pm

D'Arcy Trinkwon (19 Nov)
020 8946 5078

London W1, Grosvenor Chapel at 1.10pm

Robin Walker (5 Nov), Anthony Gritten (19 Nov) 020 7499 1684

London W1, Hinde Street Methodist Church at 12.45pm

Martin Ellis (10 Nov) 020 7935 6179

London W1, St George's, Hanover Square at 1.10pm

John Wyatt (12 Nov), Simon Bland (26 Nov) 020 7629 0874

London WC2, Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church at 4pm

Ghislaine Rees-Trapp (30 Nov)
01953 688393

London WC2, St Martin-in-the-Fields at 1pm

Paul Walton (8 Nov) 020 7766 1100

Malvern Priory at 12 noon

Paul Carr (2 Nov) 01684 561020

Newbury, St Nicolas at 1.10pm

Jonathan Holl (14 Nov) 01635 47018

Newcastle Cathedral at 1.05pm

Tim Hone (4 Nov), Ian Roberts (11 Nov), Edward Taylor (18 Nov)
0191 232 1939 (ext.209)

Norwich Cathedral at 1.10pm

Martyn Marshall (14 Nov)
01603 218306

Oxford, Keble College at 8.30pm

Adrian Gunning (7 Nov)
020 7226 1218

Oxford, Merton College Chapel at 1.15pm

Colin Walsh (7 Nov), Mark Williams (14 Nov), Benjamin Nicholas (21 Nov), Richard Gowers (28 Nov)
01865 276310

Portsmouth Cathedral at 1.10pm

Peter Gould (28 Nov) 023 9282 3300

Portsmouth, St Mary's Fratton at 7.30pm

Peter Gould (7 Nov) 023 9282 2687

Reading Town Hall at 1pm

Benjamin Chewter (18 Nov)
0118 960 6060

St Albans Cathedral at 12.30pm

Nicholas Freestone (13 Nov)
01727 860780

Swansea, Brangwyn Hall at 12.45pm

David Ponsford (5 Nov) 01792 635432

Warwick, St Mary's at 1.15pm

John Wyatt (8 Nov), Ed Jones (22 Nov)
01926 403940 (ext.3)

Wells Cathedral at 1.05pm

Wells Cathedral School students (14 Nov) 01749 674483

Worcester Cathedral at 12.15pm

Samuel Hudson (14 Nov), Andrew Caskie (21 Nov) 01905 732908

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* unless otherwise stated

ON RELEASE

NEW DISCS COMING OUT IN... NOVEMBER 2019



▲ Cinquecento: infusing a bleak text with the 'sublime'

Kaleidoscopic: the word used by vocal ensemble Cinquecento to describe their repertoire, spanning across the renaissance to incorporate a multi-faceted and complex array of compositional styles. The group's latest release, **Palestrina: Second Book of Lamentations** [Hyperion CDA 68284],

proposes a fresh look at the Lamentations of Jeremiah, hoping to infuse a somewhat bleak text with the 'sublime'.

Not only is the group's repertoire multi-faceted, but the members of Cinquecento hail from five different European countries, reflecting the traditional structure of the imperial

chapel choirs of the 16th century, whose members were hand-picked from Europe's most prestigious musical establishments. The group's *raison d'être* is to expose audiences to the lesser-known 16th-century repertoire. Their new release aims to do this by amplifying the work of a composer who taught music to Allegri.



CHORAL CDS

100 Christmas Classics

Various

Capriccio C7331 (5CDs)

Henry Aldrich: Sacred Choral Music

The Cathedral Singers of Christ Church, Oxford, Restoration Consort, D. Bannister (org)/Morley Potter

Convivium Records CR052

J.S. Bach: Advent Cantatas

Collegium Vocale Gent/Herreweghe

Harmonia mundi HMM 931605

Antoine Brumel: From Darkness to Light - The complete Lamentations of Jeremiah for Good Friday

Musica Secreta/Stras & Roberts
Obsidian Records CD 719

Christmas

The Gesualdo Six/Park
Hyperion CDA 68299

Christmas at St George's Windsor

St George's Chapel Choir Windsor, L. Bond (org)/Vivian
Hyperion CDA 68281

In No Strange Land: Choral Works by Martin Bussey

Sonor, M. Higgins (org)/Ferris
Resonus RES 10251

Josquin: Missa Mater Patris; Bauldeweyn: Missa Da pacem

Tallis Scholars/Phillips
Gimell CDGIM 052

Juris Karlsons: Oremus

Latvian Radio Choir, Sinfonietta Riga/Klava
Ondine ODE 1342-2

Lydia Kakabadse: Ithaka

C. McCaldin (m-s), Choir of Royal Holloway, P. Turner (pno), C. Beer (hp), S. Trickey (vn)/Gough
Divine Art DDA 25188

Kenneth Leighton: Sacred Choral Works

Choir of St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh/Ferguson
Delphian DCD 34218

Like to the Lark

M. Forsström (s), Swedish Chamber Choir, J. Pike (vn)/Phipps
Chandos CHSA 5255

Over the centuries, Palestrina's music received a mixed reception, with Saint-Saëns believing that his work was 'nothing but form', whereas, on hearing his music for Holy Week, Debussy exclaimed, 'That is music!' Cinquecento revive the *Lamentations* on their new release, offering a new perspective on a setting that would have been integral to liturgical rites during Holy Week in the 16th century.

It is perhaps more pertinent now than ever that choral and organ music shine light into darkness. The Chapel Choir of Selwyn College, Cambridge, under Sarah MacDonald continue their commitment to contemporary choral music with their recording of **Ben Parry's Music for Christmas** [Regent REGCD 542], in company with Ely Cathedral Girls' Choir. The disc features a range of traditional texts and new carols, offering an array of colours for the Christmas season.

In the same way, **Christmas** from The Gesualdo Six [Hyperion CDA 68299] offers seasonal music from the Tudor church to the 21st century under the direction of organist-composer Owain Park. The music selected finds its focal point in the birth of Christ, an event which represents the arrival of light in a dark world.

Similarly, **Antoine Brumel: From Darkness to Light - The complete Lamentations of Jeremiah for Good Friday** [Obsidian Records CD 719] from Musica Secreta illuminates a renaissance setting, revealing for the first time an additional 17 verses of Brumel's

Lamentations of Jeremiah, discovered 'hiding in plain sight' in Florence by the group's director, Laurie Stras, earlier this year.

From Italy to France, and Jae-Hyuck Cho's **Bach, Liszt, Widor: Organ Works** [Evidence Classics EVCD 058] transports the listener to Paris's La Madeleine, where the Korean organist-pianist recorded one of three albums released this year. The organ, built in 1845-46 by Aristide Cavaillé-Coll, now has 60 stops, while still including 95 per cent of the original pipes.

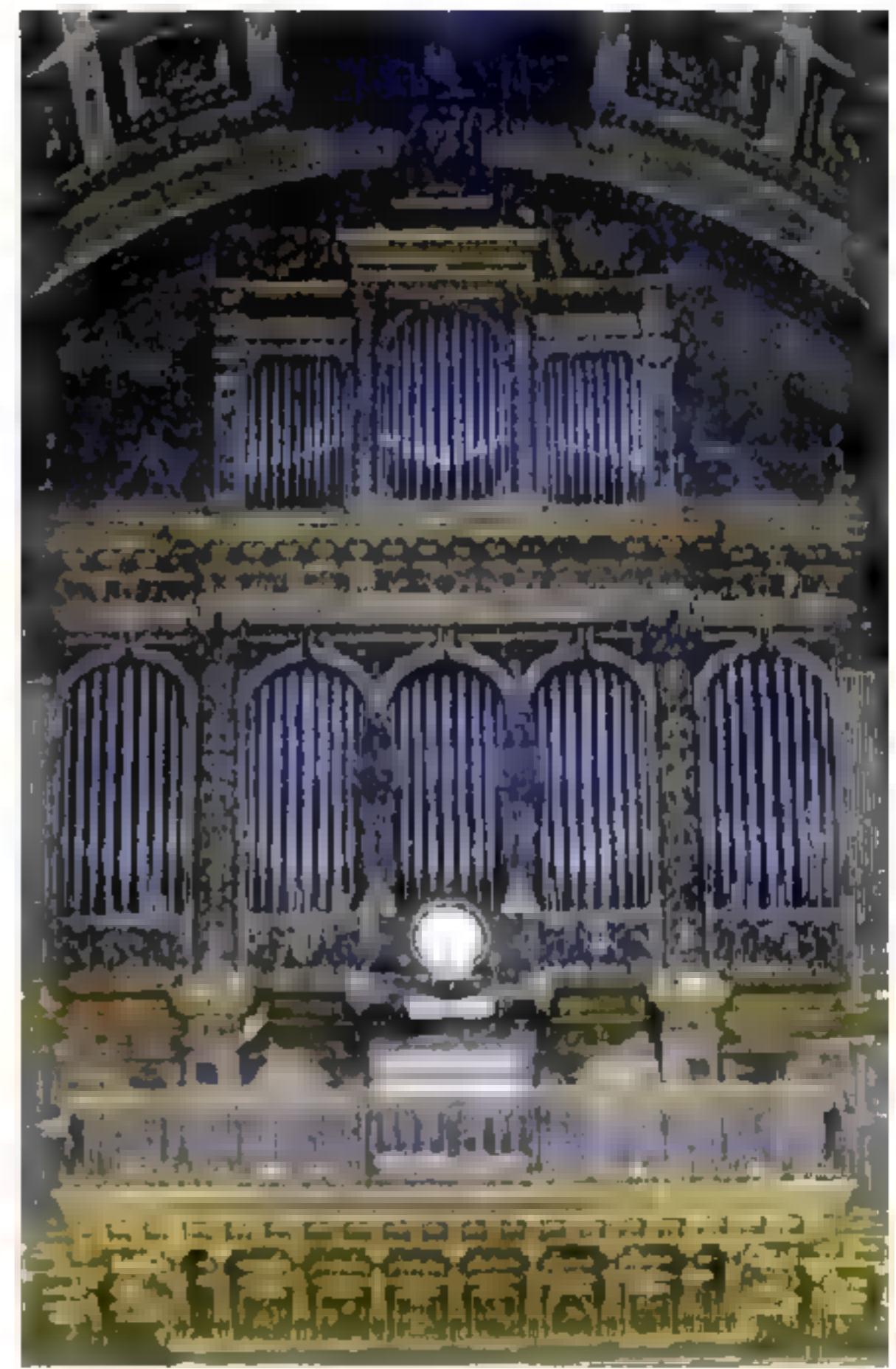
With roots in Greece, Austria, Russia and Georgia, British composer Lydia Kakabadse's music is released on **Ithaka** [Divine Art DDA 25188], the title of which refers to a person's journey through life, explored further in the first choral work on the disc, 'Odyssey'. Kakabadse's cultural heritage permeates her choral music in particular, which combines western and Mediterranean elements and is sung by mezzo-soprano Claire McCaldin and the Choir of Royal Holloway, directed by Rupert Gough.

Under the direction of Patrick Allies, vocal ensemble Siglo de Oro present **Music for Milan Cathedral** [Delphian DCD 34224], in which they perform the relatively unknown music of Matthias Werrecore, as well as works by three other composers with connections to the cathedral. They hope it will 'help to recalibrate the modern assessment of Werrecore's music'.

Having been a choral scholar at King's College, Cambridge, Martin Bussey shifted

his focus to composition and continued to nurture his interest in the relationship between music and words. Choral pieces spanning his career of over 30 years are now released as **In No Strange Land: Choral Works by Martin Bussey** [Resonus RES 10251]. The CD, which is recorded by vocal ensemble Sonoro and features a range of texts from Oscar Wilde to Charles I, was financed through Crowdfunder, suggesting that a belief in the power of music to radiate light in the dark does, it would seem, still prevail. ■

▼ The Cavaillé-Coll organ in La Madeleine, on which Jae-Hyuck Cho recorded music by Bach, Liszt and Widor



Make we Merry - Christmas music for upper voices

Benenden Chapel Choir, Instrs/ Whiting Regent REGCD 547

Music for Milan Cathedral

Siglo de Oro/Allies Delphian DCD 34224

Nowell synge we bothe al and som

Gothic Voices Linn CKD 591

O come all ye faithful

Cherwell Singers/Craig-McFeely Classical Communications CCLCDG 1290

O Holy Night

London Choral Sinfonia/Waldron Orchid Classics ORC 100110

Palestrina: Second Book of Lamentations

Cinquecento Hyperion CDA 68284

Ben Parry: Music for Christmas

Chapel Choir of Selwyn College, Cambridge, Ely Cathedral Girls' Choir, Instrs/MacDonald Regent REGCD 542

Cilia Petridou: Visions of the Greek Soul

J. Harper & L-J. Rogers (s), S. Legg (m-s), A. Mackenzie-Wicks (t), J. Birchall & P. Ardagh-Walter (b)/ Smart Divine Art DDA 21233

France, 13th century; Peninsule Ibérique - Mozarabic chant; Chants

de l'église de Rome; Romanesque / Art roman; Franciscan manuscripts from... Corsica; Traditions of plain chant: Cathédrale d'Auxerre (18th cent.)

Ensemble Organum/Pérès Harmonia mundi HMO 8901403, 8901519, 8901604, 8901392, 8901495

ORGAN CDS

Bach, Liszt, Widor: Organ Works Jae-Hyuck Cho, La Madeleine, Paris Evidence Classics EVCD 058



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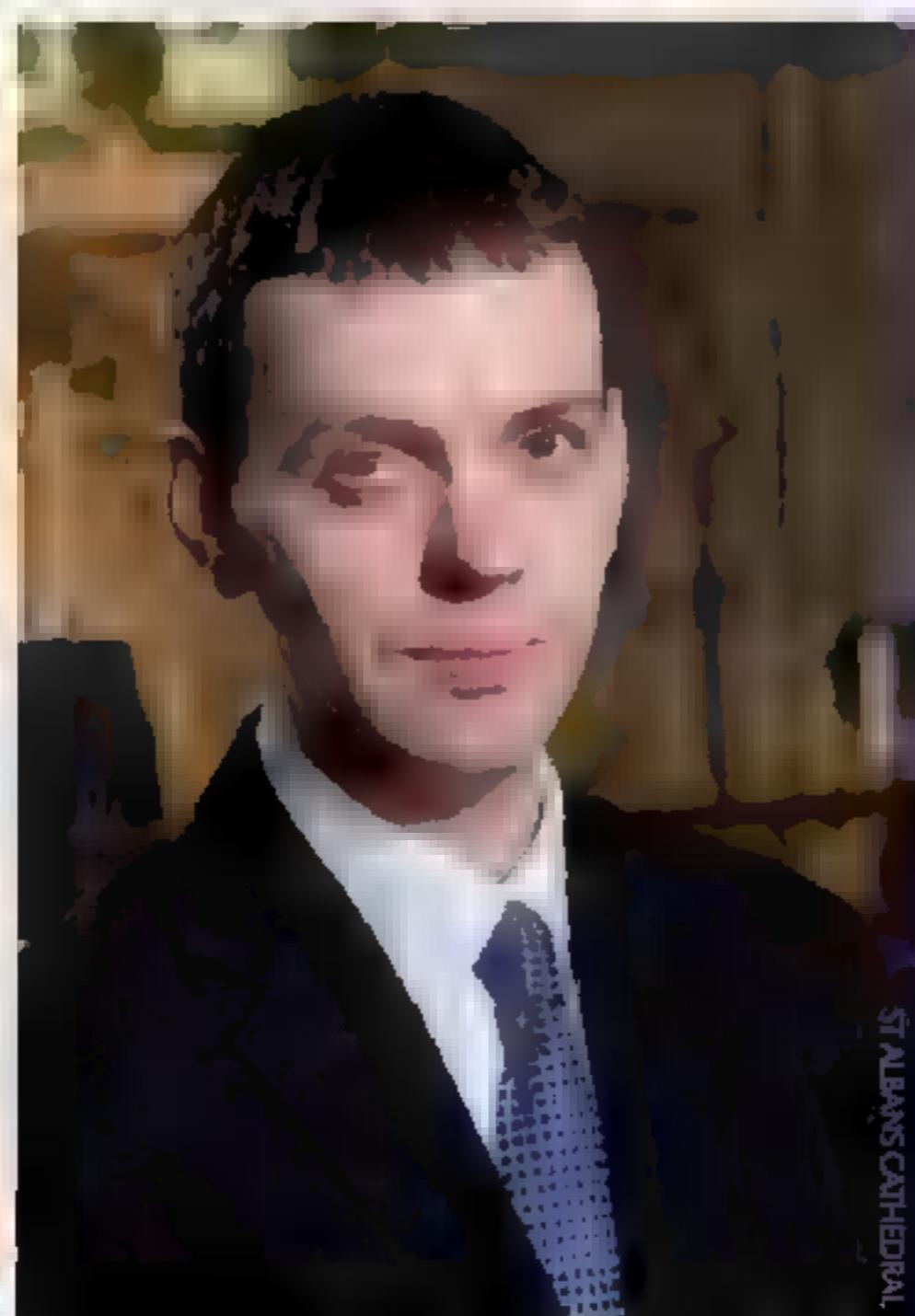
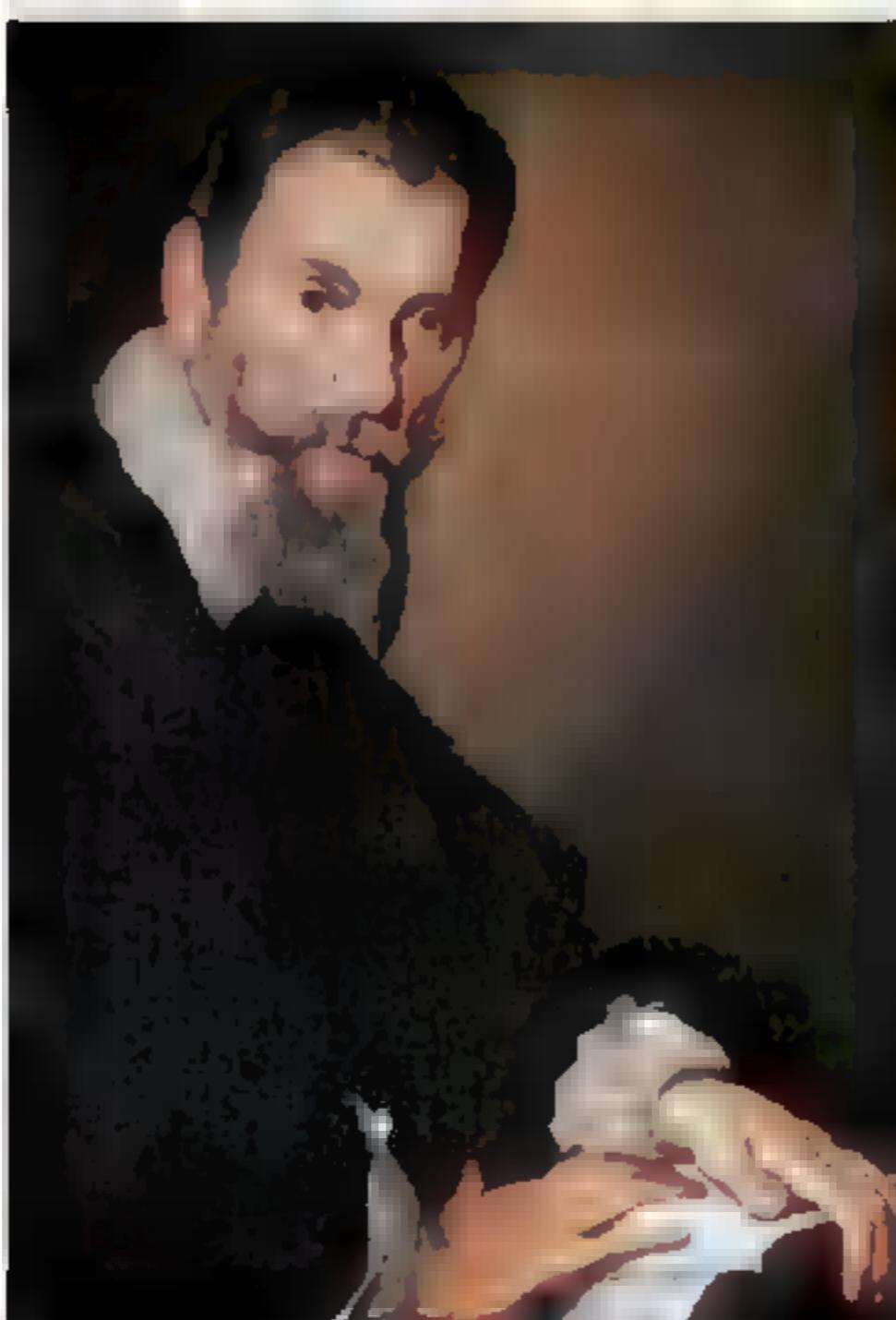
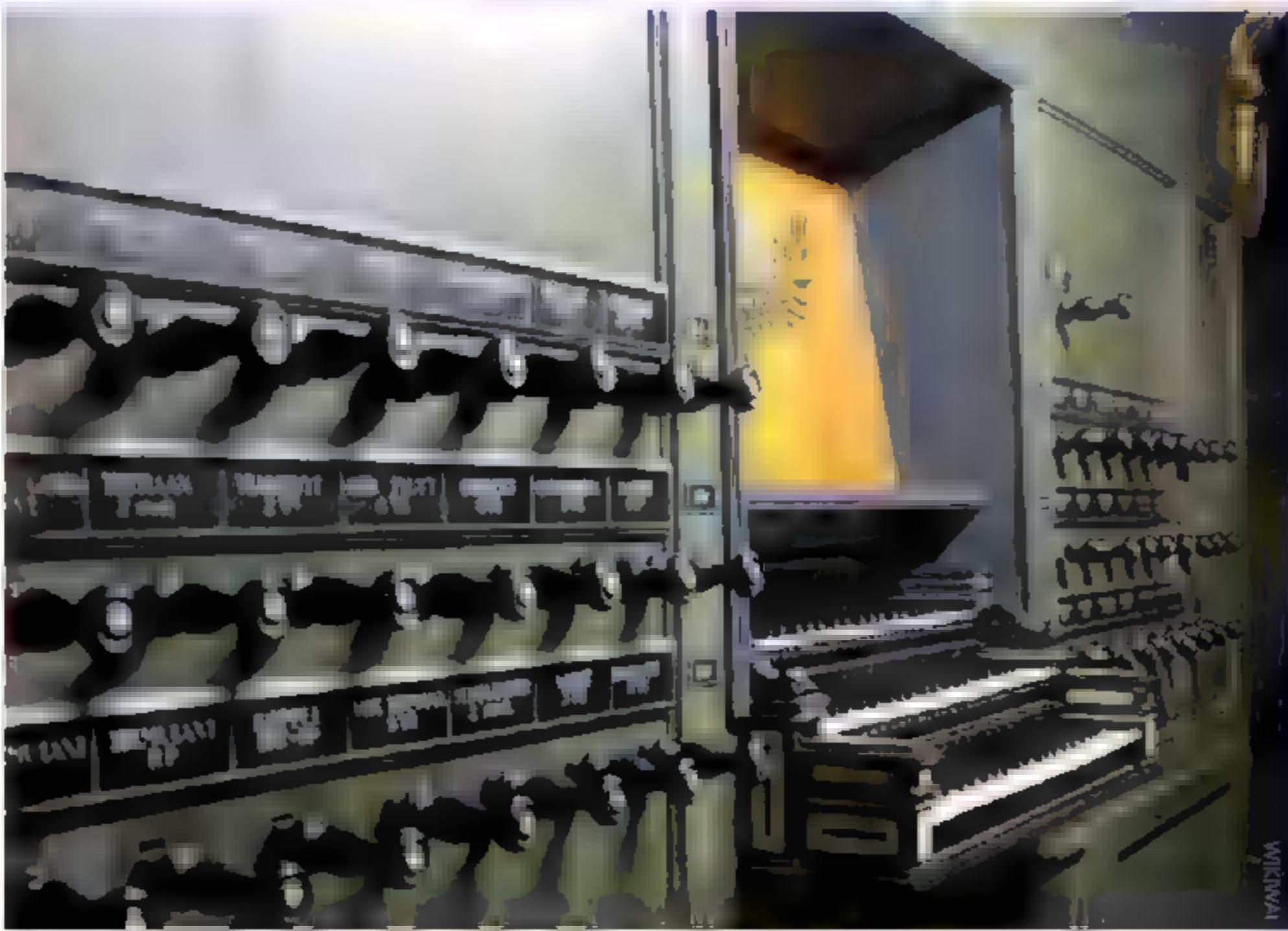
24–31 August 2020

28 September–3 October 2020

2–7 November 2020

REVIEWS

Rating: ★★★★ Highly recommended 4/4 ★ Very good 3 1/2/4 Good 3 1/4/4 Average 3 1/2/4 Poor



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Jeremy Summerly

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KEYBOARD CDS

Noëls français

Daniel Meylan, Isnard organ, Basilica of St-Maximin en Var Hortus 173 [72:00]

★★★



This collection of 13 noëls by Dandrieu, Daquin, Michel

Corrette, Balbastre and Daniel Meylan are played on a justifiably famous French organ, dating from 1774, restored by Pascal Quoirin in 2017. The organ sounds wonderful in the classical French registrations, including some splendid *timbourin* and *musette* effects. Meylan's own variations on *Voici le jour solennel* are classical style, consisting of *plein jeu*, *duo*, *cromorne en taille*, *trio*,

récit au dessus and *grand jeu*. In these large acoustics, the playing is careful and precise, but for a CD, tempi sound conservative and there is scope for more direction in each phrase.

DAVID PONSFORD

Dan Locklair: Symphony no.2 'America'

Peter Mikula (org), Slovak National Symphony Orchestra / Kirk Trevor & Michael Roháč (dirs) Naxos 8.559860 [62:34]

★★★



Dan Locklair's music is unmistakably infused with American life and history, and no more so than in the Second Symphony 'America'. This piece

comes off the best on this disc: in *Hail the coming day* and *PHOENIX*, the emotion just doesn't shine through with the same vibrancy or conviction. This is partly due to the rather two-dimensional sound, which doesn't allow *PHOENIX* to capture the intended majesty of a grand church reopening. This cinematic sound is not the best environment for the Concerto for Organ and Orchestra either. The Concerto is built around the cleverly-contrived middle movement 'Canto (To God & Dog)' incorporating the hymn 'Of the Father's heart begotten'. Peter Mikula has to work hard to lend sparkle to the organ part, which finally comes alive in the concluding Toccata.

RUPERT GOUGH

Illuminations

SharonRose Pfeiffer, Barden/ Skinner organ, Church of the Transfiguration, Orleans, Massachusetts

Paraclete GDCD 059 [70:32]

★★★



The organ at the Church of the Transfiguration in Orleans is an ongoing project by Nelson Barden uniting elements from 17 different organs by E.M. Skinner. It is located in chambers hung from the ceiling along the full length of the church's side aisles. When completed it will have fully 12,000 pipes and 150 ranks.

While the scale of the organ versus that of the church flirts with the absurd, the quality of the Skinner material is clear for

Johann Sebastian Bach: Dritter Theil der Clavierübung

Andreas Fischer, Flentrop organ (2013), St Catherine's Church, Hamburg MDG Scene MDG 906 2120-6 (2CDs) [53:12, 60:22]

★★★★★



This is a strong, monumental performance of *Clavierübung III* on the best modern instrument I have heard. This is Reincken's organ on which J.S. Bach ('who could not praise enough') played in 1720, now reconstructed after the original was largely destroyed in 1943. Only 520 original pipes survive, but now with four manuals, 61 registers, a 16ft Hauptwerk and 32ft Pedal, Andreas Fischer exploits the power, gravitas, colour and brilliance to wonderful effect, often using the 32ft Pedal reed in *organo pleno*. Tempi, thankfully, are not unduly rushed and admirable clarity is retained despite the huge acoustics. A benchmark recording.

DAVID PONSFORD

► St Catherine's reconstructed organ



MATHIAS FISCHER/DIE BALDERWERT

all to hear and the room does at least provide some 'bloom'. Among Sharon Rose Pfeiffer's meaty programme, Larry King's *Resurrection* provides an appropriately American-flavoured opening with the soaring big reed in the central section. The organ sounds at its best here and in the excerpts from Eben's *Job*. BWV 651 on a traditional plenum is rather dull and the first movement of Widor's Sixth Symphony never quite catches fire. The Sortie from Messiaen's *Messe de la Pentecôte* is spoiled by the collapse in tempo when the hands cross on the fourth page and a slightly disjointed performance of the Reubke Sonata features a curious misreading at the E major dotted unison chords in the final fugue; B should become B sharp in soprano and tenor on the third beat semiquaver.

CHRIS BRAGG

Olivier Messiaen: *Monodie; Diptyque; Les corps glorieux*

Jon Gillock, Quoirin organ (2011), Church of the Ascension, New York City
Raven OAR 984 [71:26]

★★★★



This is the fourth in a series of six Messiaen CDs by America's pre-eminent Messiaen interpreter Jon Gillock. Gillock's association with Messiaen and his decades of familiarity with this repertoire are wholly evident throughout this release – not least in the softly ecstatic *Monodie* and second part of the *Diptyque*, in which the influence of Messiaen's teachers, Dukas and especially Dupré, so evident in

the opening, seems to evaporate forever. The organ heard here is the 100-plus rank Pascal Quoirin instrument in the modestly sized Episcopal Church of the Ascension in New York. Its wealth of softer colours, especially the harmonic flutes, is enchanting. Only in 'Combat de la mort' is any sense of decadence evident; sometimes less is more, especially when the space bears no relation in either scale or sound to anything French. It is, nevertheless, beautifully captured by Raven's microphones and the booklet, as usual from them, is excellent.

CHRIS BRAGG

Joseph Renner's Organ Music

Thomasz Zajac, St Matthew's Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession, Łódź, Poland

DUX 1370 [71:19]

★★★★



Joseph Renner was a student of Rheinberger and his sizeable output of organ music continues the compositional trend of his teacher. Thomasz Zajac begins with three delightful preludes before the main work, the second Organ Sonata. With its fine concluding passacaglia, one can see why Max Reger admired its inventiveness and harmonic quirks. The organ in this vast Polish church is an interesting late-romantic instrument built by Rieger in 1928. The upper work is not as refined as earlier Walker or Sauer instruments but the foundation work is a delight in the Organ Suite no.1. All finely crafted performances from Thomas Zajac of music that deserves to be better known.

RUPERT GOUGH



ST ALBANS CATHEDRAL

■ Tom Winpenny: his Messiaen series 'just gets better and better'

Messiaen: *Méditations sur le mystère de la Sainte Trinité*

Tom Winpenny, Hallgrímskirkja, Reykjavík
Naxos 8.573979 [71:19]

★★★★★



Tom Winpenny continues his impressive Messiaen cycle with the 1969 *Méditations*. This large nine-movement work marked a turning point for the composer after the austerity and experimentalism of the 1950s. Although the genesis of this work was a series of improvisations to mark the centenary of Messiaen's own church in Paris, La Trinité, the first performance was held in Washington, D.C.

'Clarity and resonance'

I cannot help feeling that the well-travelled Messiaen would have approved of the Klais organ in the Icelandic capital. It renders all the colours with forthright clarity and an atmospheric resonance heightened by Winpenny's thoughtful pacing. Rounded off with Winpenny's well-judged sleeve notes, this series of Messiaen recordings just gets better and better.

RUPERT GOUGH



REGENT RECORDS New and recent releases



REGCD538

PRIÈRES POUR NOTRE DAME

Music for organ and upper voices by Dupré, Boulanger, Demessieux, Poulenc

The Cavaillé-Coll organ of St Ouen, Rouen

Colin Walsh (organ), Senior Girls of Romsey Abbey Choir, directed by George Richford

15 Versets pour les Vêpres du commun des Fêtes de la Sainte-Vierge, Op 18 Dupré, Pie Jesu Boulanger, Attende Domine; Rorate Caeli (12 Choral Preludes on Gregorian Chant Themes, Op 8) Demessieux, Litanies à la Vierge Noire Poulenc



REGCD542

BEN PARRY

Music for Christmas

The Chapel Choir of Selwyn College, Cambridge, Ely Cathedral Girls' Choir, Prime Brass, directed by Sarah MacDonald

A sparkling collection of Christmas music by one of the UK's most distinguished and versatile musicians. There is new choral music for the entire Christmas season from Advent to Epiphany, settings and arrangements of traditional texts, plus several new carols with original words by Garth Bardsley.



REGCD547

MAKE WE MERRY

Christmas music for upper voices by David Bednall, Bob Chilcott and Sarah Quartel

Benenden Chapel Choir, London Metropolitan Brass, directed by Edward Whiting

The first recording of David Bednall's major new Christmas work for upper voices and brass, *Make we merry*, alongside Bob Chilcott's *The Midnight of his birth*, and *Snow Angel* by Sarah Quartel.

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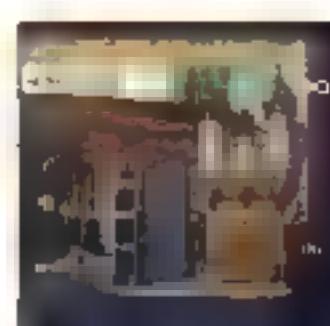


THE Leys
C A M B R I D G E

◀ **Johann Sebastian Bach: A New Angle**

Leo van Doeselaar and Erwin Wiersinga, Schnitger and Le Picard organs, Martinikerk, Groningen
MDG 906 2137-6 [73:54]

★★★★



Yet another Bach CD on the most recorded Bach organ in the world (probably?) ... well, yes, but at least this one comes with a twist. Such are the politics around the famous Groningen organ that the organists heard here are two of *eight* resident players, although neither Leo van Doeselaar nor Erwin Wiersinga are responsible for playing services. And such are the politics that the opening track of this collection of Bach transcriptions, BWV 29, is the same as that on a very recent CD by another of the resident organists. Nonetheless, this is a very enjoyable disc indeed, and rare in including the 1744 Le Picard organ in the choir, originally the *Positif de Dos* of a larger instrument elsewhere. On it, Wiersinga plays the Ciacona, with something of the intimacy of the original, and three movements from *Die Kunst der Fuge*. The remainder includes Guy Bovet's transcription of the concerto for four harpsichords (Wiersinga) and the Toccata in D, BWV 912 (Van Doeselaar, with creative use of the pedal). The glorious conclusion is provided by the chorale *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*, BWV 80, arranged for four hands and feet. The playing of both organists is splendid and lively and the spectacular Groningen organ, although claustrophobically captured here, never disappoints.

CHRIS BRACK

CHORAL CDS

The Last Rose of Summer: Folk Songs from the British Isles

The Queen's Six
Signum Classics SIGCD 598
[72:50]

★★★★



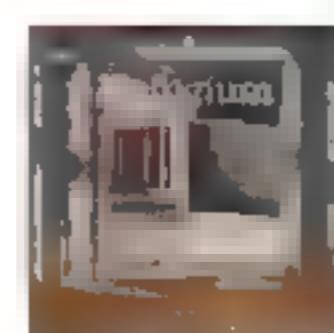
The line-up of two counter-tenors, two tenors and two baritone/basses means it is impossible to avoid comparisons between this group of six lay clerks from St George's Chapel, Windsor and The King's Singers – but The Queen's Six do have a sound of their own. Their starting point here is Ralph Vaughan Williams's famous exploration of the folksong tradition, and his beautiful arrangements of 'Bushes and briars' and 'The turtle dove' are included, together with others by Grainger and Holst and a substantial number of more recent arrangements. Some are by well-known names, others by members of the ensemble themselves and their contemporaries; all are imaginative and appealing, taking some deliciously unexpected twists and turns.

CLARE STEVENS

Refugium

Trinity Boys Choir, Lewis Brito-Babapulle (org), Michael Prager (pos. org), Rainer Furthner, Thomas Hastreiter, Sabine Pyrker (perc) / David Swinson (dir)
Stone Records 5050192780819
[63:58]

★★★★



Best known for their performances on the operatic stage and in commercial films, Trinity

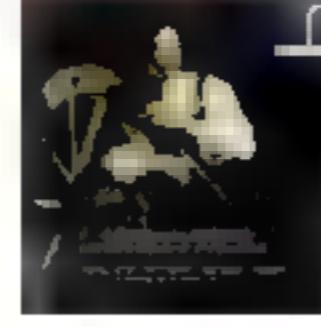
Boys Choir here present a very different programme of contemporary music on the theme of sanctuary, recorded by invitation in the Herz-Jesu-Kirche, Munich, consecrated in 2000 and featuring a versatile and characterful Woehl organ, showcased in much of the repertoire. Short works by Jonathan Dove, John Tavener, Judith Weir, Richard Wilberforce and Tom Harrold are delivered with aplomb; Howard Moody's *Weigh me the fire* is particularly impressive. The *raison d'être* of the recording is Graham Lack's *Refugium*, an atmospheric setting of texts by the Croatian poet Petar Hektorović; unusual percussion effects add to the shifting, dissonant soundworld of the choral and organ parts. Accomplished performances of interesting music would have been enhanced by more coherent liner notes, offering a better explanation of the context of *Refugium*. I wanted to know why this choir was recording this piece in this place!

CLARE STEVENS

O Gemma Clarissima: Music in praise of St Catharine

Choirs of St Catharine's College, Cambridge / Edward Wickham (dir)
Resonus RES 10246 [72:02]

★★★



With professional consorts drawn time and again to Marian repertoire, wonderful though it is, it is refreshing to be introduced to this lovely selection from the 'vast array of motets, hymns, and Mass movements' written in response to the cult of St Catharine in the late 15th and 16th centuries by composers

such as Frye, Mouton, Jacquet of Mantua and Palestrina. While the undergraduate SATB choir doesn't always have quite enough precision or vocal stamina to respond to Wickham's skilled direction in the more complex works, the sequence is punctuated by Sarum chant, beautifully sung by the upper voices and by the college's girls' choir. Gombert's *Virgo sancta Katharina* for four equal high voices is a highlight, and Fawkyner's *Gaude rosa sine spina* a splendid finale.

CLARE STEVENS

Handel: Utrecht Te Deum and Jubilate; Ode for the Birthday of Queen Anne; Suite for *H pastor fido*

Christina Landshamer (s), Anja Scherg (s), Reginald Mobley (c-t), Benedikt Kristánsson (t), Andreas Wolf (b), Gaechinger Cantorey / Hans-Christoph Rademann (dir)
Carus 83.310 [79:20]

★★★★



This live recording was captured in Stuttgart's Liederhalle in 2018. The main works in the programme show Handel composing for state occasions – the birthday of a royal patroness who granted him a substantial pension for life, and a celebration of an important European peace agreement. While only the opening movement of the *Queen Anne Birthday Ode* is widely familiar (with a little recent help from Megan Markle), the *Utrecht Te Deum and Jubilate* deserve to be better known and would make excellent repertoire for choral societies. Rademann conducts throughout with characteristic fervour and attention to detail, ▶

Christmas selection

Matthew Power takes his pick of seasonal discs received in the last 12 months



A hefty bag of Christmas discs hits the doormat and provides a wealth of new settings for choirs to explore, including much variety from the cathedrals. On **An Ely Christmas** [Regent REGCD 527], the Cathedral's warm acoustics and organ accompaniment

are balanced by the clear and finely-tuned voices of the girl choristers (joined in a few tracks by the lay clerks) in familiar and new repertoire. Over to Portsmouth, where the

sizeable Cathedral Choir is joined by the Cathedral Consort and Youth Choir for **Verbum Caro Factum Est** [Herald HAVPCD 407], a wide-ranging collection of familiar and newer pieces, including the charming *Missa ad praesepe* (George Malcolm) and gems from Walton, Carter and Stopford – well worth sampling for its repertoire and well-honed sounds. In London, the RC St George's Cathedral in Southwark has developed a distinctive choral presence, including the introduction of girl choristers in 2003. On **Christmas at St George's** [Regent REGCD 533], top lines combine with the lay clerks in an interesting programme built around seasonal chant, hymns and choral settings, all sung with understanding and energy. Meanwhile, the Choir of Westminster School sings stunning contemporary repertoire with style, precision and conviction, including works by MacMillan, Martin, McDowall and Panufnik; **Now May We Sing** [Signum Classics SIGCD 595] is an exciting recording, which benefits from the attractive acoustics and organ of Keble College Chapel, Oxford, where it was recorded.

Here are two antidotes to all the choral and organ settings. The Margaretha Consort beautifully perform music for voices and viol consort from the 17th century on **A German Christmas** [Naxos 8.551398], with settings by Schütz, Praetorius, Siefert, Hassler and their contemporaries, many of which will adapt easily for inclusion in Christmas liturgies. If the names Eccard, Sweelinck, Guerrero, Byrd, Tallis, Lassus (and more) grab your attention, then The Sixteen's **A Renaissance Christmas** [Coro COR 16167] is for you. Glorious renaissance polyphony is interspersed with plainchant in this treasure trove, and full

texts, translations and informative sleeve notes make this an enviable Christmas present.

Explore new repertoire with these two excellent recordings. On **The Mystery of Christmas - Magnum Mysterium** [Harmonia mundi HMM 905305], inspired by our 'second Golden Age' of choral music, the ORA Singers commission new works and combine them in programmes with medieval and renaissance composers. This vibrant collection includes works by Lauridsen, MacMillan and Weir, and is worth acquiring to hear new pieces by Roderick Williams, Adrian Peacock, Fredrik Sixten and Steven Sametz. There is keen and expressive singing, and many musical surprises. **Christmas with Sonoro** [Resonus RES 10226] presents yet more new and proven repertoire, with exemplary singing from Sonoro, directed by Neil Ferris. Characterful solo voices combine in a powerful yet delicately blended ensemble (17 voices in total), mixing a cappella and organ-accompanied repertoire. Writing by Michael Higgins, Fintan O'Carroll, Becky McGlade and Gareth Treseider are among the new arrivals here and complement works by Howells, Warlock and others in an innovative and inspiring offering.

Finally, a collector's item. **100 Years of Nine Lessons & Carols - The Choir of King's College, Cambridge** [BBC/King's College, Cambridge KGS 0033] is a 2-CD set both fascinating and a joy to explore. The first disc is a collection of archive recordings from the time of David Willcocks, Philip Ledger and Stephen Cleobury, with recording dates ranging from 1958 to 2017. Tracks include premieres by Judith Weir (1985), Thomas Adès (1997) and others. The second disc is newly recorded. Most interesting is the difference in approach (pronunciation, tone) between the three incumbent conductors. There are also insightful historical notes from Timothy Day plus period photographs. Buy now while stocks last!

Also received:

In Dulci Jubilo – Harmonia Sacra [Nimbus Alliance LC 5871]

Lumen de lumine – Choir of Oriel College, Oxford [OxRecs Digital OXCD-139]

Beneath the Incense Tree – Choir of Trinity College, Melbourne [Acis APL 17427]

Joseph Haas (1879-1960): Christnacht op.85 – Cantica Nova

Holzkirchen [Chromart Classics TXA 18111]

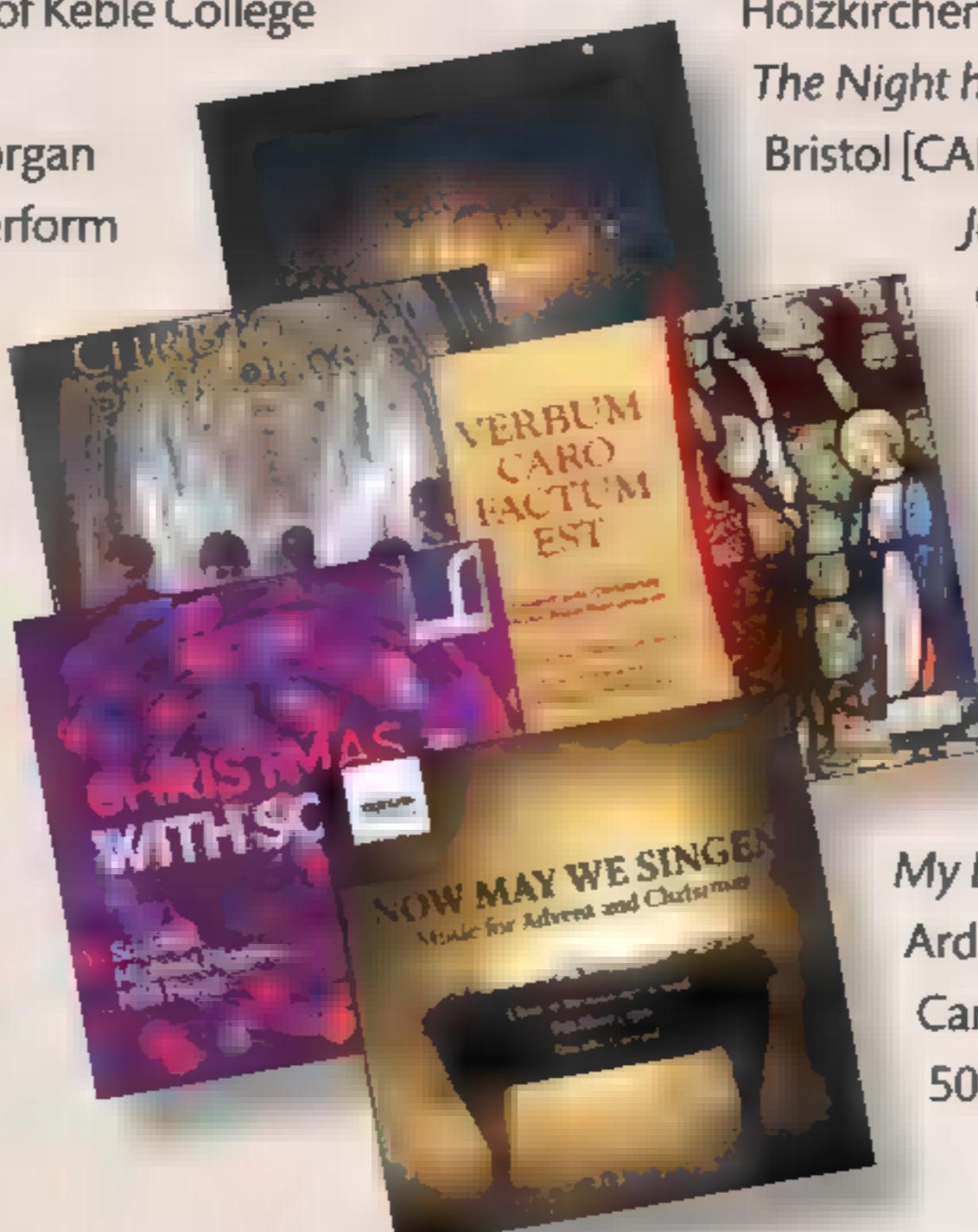
The Night he was Born – Choirs of St Mary Redcliffe Church, Bristol [CAMRAF 1804]

Joy to the World – Palestrina Choir of St Mary's Pro Cathedral, Dublin [Pro Cathedral Dublin]

Christmas on Sugarloaf Mountain – An Irish-Appalachian Celebration – Apollo's Fire [Avie AV 2396]

Born on a New Day – Christmas Music from Belfast Cathedral [Priory PRCD 1195]

My Lord has Come – Ardingly College Schola Cantorum [Stone Records 5060192780857]



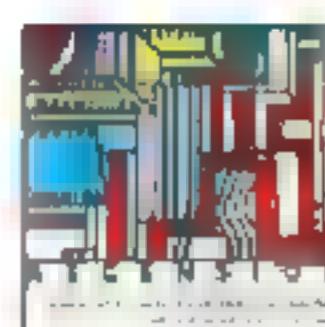
the singers and instrumentalists of the Gaechinger Cantorey delivering stylish accounts under his direction. The soloists are all fine, but counter-tenor Reginald Mobley is outstanding.

PHILIP REED

Ascension (MacMillan, Leighton, Allain, Gowers, Messiaen)

Susan Hamilton (s), Revd Philip Blackledge (cant), Choir of St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh, Simon Niemirski (org) / Matthew Owens (dir/org) Delphian DCD 34017 [76:22]

★★★★★



Originally released in 2003, this splendid CD celebrates the

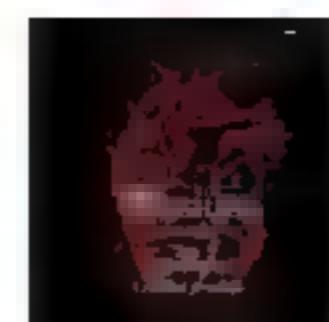
Feast of the Ascension in the form of the Anglican service of Choral Evensong, but without the spoken element, followed by a performance of Messiaen's great organ work *L'Ascension*, here beautifully played by Matthew Owens. The repertoire is virtually all contemporary and has close associations with the Choir of St Mary's, who are in exceptional form, with bright, direct singing that is a complete pleasure to listen to. Their account of MacMillan's *Tremunt videntes angeli* (its premiere recording) is compelling, as is Richard Allain's *Exon Service* with its striking use of a halo of sound to suggest the angels' presence. A stunning CD.

PHILIP REED

Passions – Venezia 1600-1750 (Monteverdi, Lotti, Caldara)

Les Cris de Paris / Geoffroy Jourdain (dir) Harmonia mundi HMM 902632 [75:31]

★★★★★



In choral music, passion is usually singular and capitalised as

Christ's sacrifice. Les Cris de Paris, the hippest choir on the scene, have played respectfully but imaginatively with that expectation, weaving together a sequence of four-, eight- and sixteen-voice *Crucifixus* themes by Monteverdi and, less familiarly, Lotti and Caldara, with vernacular themes of the same high Venetian period. The singing is, as ever, bold and dramatic, but always accurate, and the sequence, which begins with a strange lullaby and whose vocal part ends with

Monteverdi's *È questa vita un lampo* – 'This life is (just) a bolt of lightning' – serves as a reminder that Calvary was also a strange kind of holiday for the populace, a day for the *affetti* as well ■ for the Passion.

BRIAN MORTON

Jake Runestad: The Hope of Loving

Conspirare / Craig Hella Johnson (dir) Delos DE 3578 [79:12]

★★★



Runestad's imagination is what used to be called 'engaged', in the sense of motivated by

political, social and ethical issues. Many will notice the title *Why The Caged Bird Sings* among the works here and will think of Maya Angelou; but Runestad, typically, has gone back to the title's real origin in the works of Paul Laurence Dunbar. He describes himself as a 'hoarder' of poetry, and like a lot of vocal composers is drawn to writing with lots of open vowels and plosive consonants. It sometimes takes him into strange places, where jaunty doggerel awaits, but he has better judgement; the *American Triptych*, to texts by Thoreau, Wendell Berry and John Muir ▶

Folk Songs

Calmus Ensemble Carus 83.034 [69:45]

★★★★★



Immaculate diction in 14 languages characterises this collection of 21 songs from 17 countries performed by the Leipzig-based Calmus Ensemble, many of them specially arranged for

their line-up of soprano, (male) alto, tenor,

baritone and bass. Tuning and musical expression are immaculate too – this is a very polished quintet, and as one of their arrangers, Juan Garcia, comments in the liner notes, they make complex arrangements sound easy. Yet whether they are taking the listener to Ecuador or Denmark, Lithuania or Wales, they never forget the storytelling aspect of folksongs. A very engaging collection.

CLARE STEVENS

■ 'Immaculate tuning and musical expression': the Calmus Ensemble



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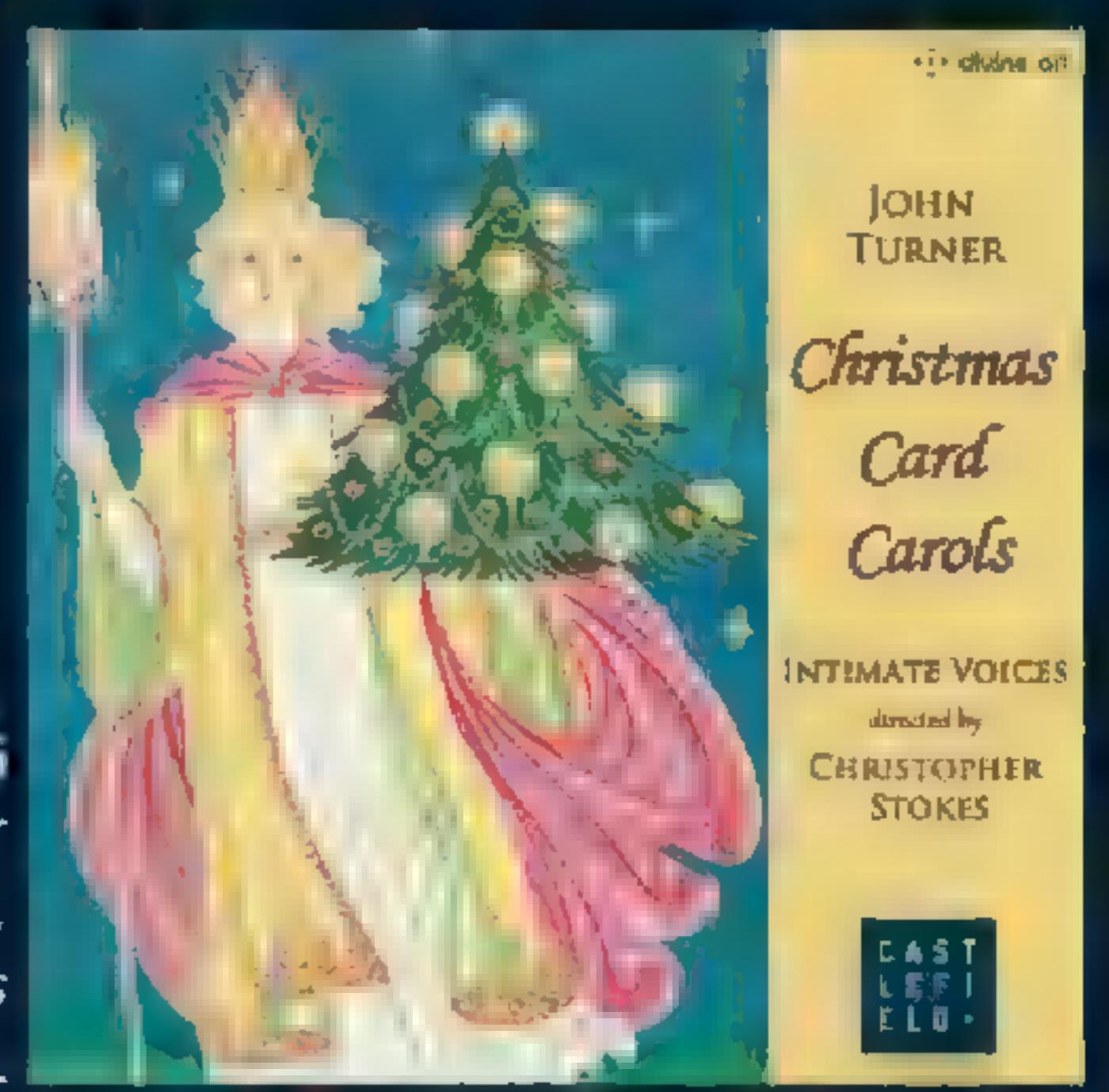
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Manhattan Singers / Orla Flanagan

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I cannot fault this CD! — MusicWeb International

Portals

Portals

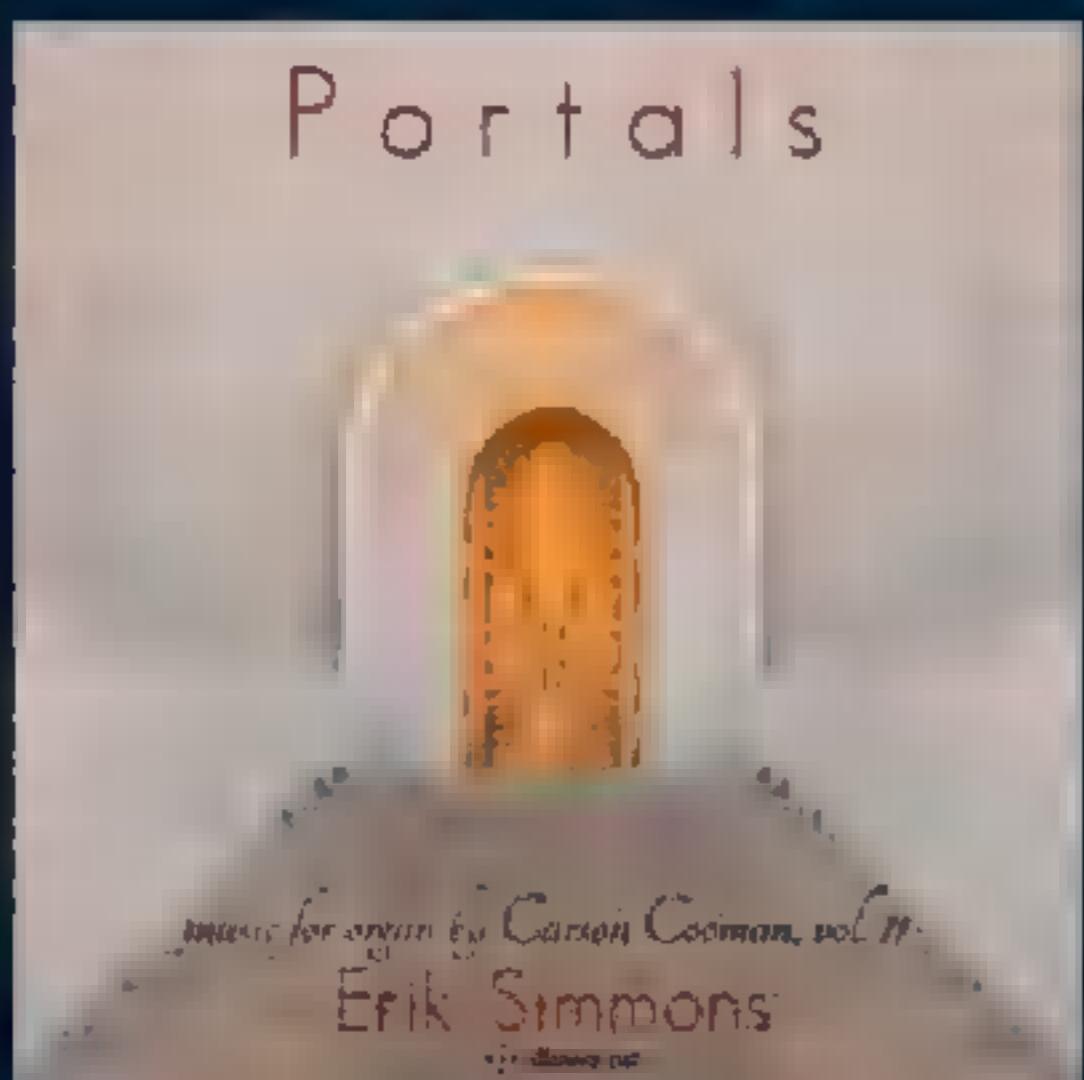
Carson Cooman Organ Music vol. 11

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Erik Simmons

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(released September 20)



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Requiem

By Vsevolod Artyomov

Soloists, Kaunas State Chorus, Moscow Philharmonic

Divine Art DDA 25173

"A great recording...no mistake..."
— Musical Opinion



◀ (which rightly promises an environmental but not unlyrical theme), is magnificent and sung with firm authority by *Conspirare*, who really do live up to their name; 'conspiracy' is 'breathing together', and their ensemble discipline is impressive all the way through.

BRIAN MORTON

Haydn: *The Creation* (sung in German)

Nicole Heaton (s), Toby Spence (t), Peter Rose (b), Houston Symphony Chorus (dir: Betsy Cook Weber), Houston Symphony / Andrés Orozco-Estrada (dir) Pentatone PTC 5186 614 (2SACDs) [52:41; 46:46]

★★★



There is no shortage of excellent accounts of Haydn's choral masterpiece on CD: the popularity of *The Creation*, with its vivid characterisation and richly coloured orchestration, is seemingly unassailable. Despite working with a large choir and modern instruments, Orozco-Estrada manages to drive the action in a well-paced account that never misses Haydn's genius for a felicitous harmonic twist or orchestral colour to reflect the drama. The large choir delivers at every turn, revelling especially in Haydn's more extrovert writing. The male soloists fare better than their female companion, whose diction is not flawless and whose tone is perhaps a shade too vibrant for Haydn's soundworld. But it's an enjoyable account, though perhaps not one that would displace the best recordings.

PHILIP REED

Brahms: *Ein deutsches Requiem*

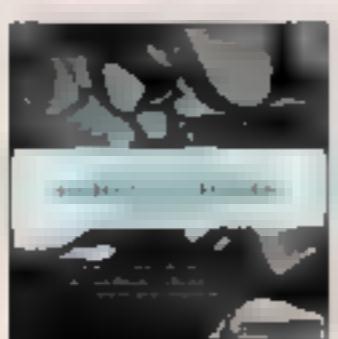
Christine Karg (s), Matthias Goerne (bar), Swedish Radio Choir (Marc Korovitch: chorus master), Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra / Daniel Harding (dir) Harmonia mundi HMM 902635 [70:32]

★★★★

Brahms: *Ein deutsches Requiem*

Johanna Winkel (s), Krešimir Stražanac (bar), Chorwerk Ruhr, Sebastian Breuing and Christoph Schnackertz (pno) / Florian Helgath (dir) Coviello Classics COV 91905 [69:06]

★★★★★



Completed in 1868, Brahms's Requiem deliberately departs from the models of the Catholic liturgy. For Brahms, brought up in Protestant north Germany, offers something quite different: a sequence of sorrowful or consolatory texts drawn from the Lutheran Bible. The result is a meditation on death, bereavement, grief and the Last Judgement. Because of these particular qualities, it shows Brahms drawing on the ideas of his musical forebears, notably Heinrich Schütz, whose music fascinated him. Easily Brahms's longest composition, *Ein deutsches Requiem* remains a cornerstone of the Austro-German choral repertoire, one that most choirs, professional or amateur, will always want to sing.

Daniel Harding's new recording with his well-drilled Swedish forces undoubtedly captures the meditative nature of Brahms's intentions. Tempi are generally relaxed. While the opening movement felt too lacking in momentum, the second movement's sombre B flat minor march (derived from a sketch for an early, abandoned

symphony) is perfectly judged, with thrilling crescendos and an appropriately insistent timpani beat. Throughout, the Swedish Radio Choir (no list of singers is given in the liner booklet, but they don't sound numerous) sing with covered tone but can generally deliver as much power as Harding needs from them. They are at their very best in the quieter movements and are especially satisfying in the intermezzo-like fourth movement, 'Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen, Herr Zebaoth'. Both soloists are excellent, though as much as I admire Goerne, I rather wish he weren't placed quite so far forward in the aural perspective. On that subject, the chorus do sometimes sound a bit recessed, especially in the Requiem's 'big' moments. Overall, it's a fine performance which, while it undoubtedly captures the essence of the piece, wouldn't really be my library choice.

Chorwerk Ruhr's account under Florian Helgath shares virtually the same overall timing as Harding's recording. Performing the work in Brahms's own arrangement for piano (4 hands) does bring some advantages in terms of clarity of textures, even if one misses the sustaining quality of Brahms's orchestral writing, not to speak of his imaginative orchestration. Working with a small group of singers, Helgath finds the forward momentum that keeps Brahms's phrases alive even when the tempo is leisurely. Particularly attractive is the lilt he finds in the fourth movement, and the drama in the depiction of the Last Judgment in movement 6. While his soloists are not the vocal stars of Harding's account, they are nevertheless both very fine, with Johanna Winkel acquitted herself with honours in the famous soprano solo – again aided by Helgath's flowing tempo. Of all the accounts of the piano (4 hands) versions I've heard, this is now top of my list.

PHILIP REED

▼ Florian Helgath: in Chorwerk Ruhr's Requiem, he 'finds the forward momentum that keeps Brahms's phrases alive'



CHRISTIAN PALM

EARLY MUSIC



Rebecca Tavener rounds up the latest releases

Composers of the distant past who have been posthumously overshadowed by more celebrated contemporaries are coming to the fore as fine professional performers, seeking rare repertoire, become their convincing advocates. Here are three exciting releases in that category, featuring almost contemporaneous composers who more than deserve the limelight: Hieronymous Praetorius (eclipsed by Schütz), John Amner (gubbed by Gibbons), and Alessandro Grandi (deemed the equal of Claudio Monteverdi in his day).

A double CD of **Hieronymous Praetorius – Motets in 8, 10, 12, 16 ■ 20 Parts** [Inventa INV 001] comes from Alamire with His Majestys Sagbutts & Cornetts, directed by David Skinner. Praetorius composed c.100 motets (as well as Mass settings and more), and these large-scale works from the most important member of ■ Hamburg musical dynasty are a gloriously German reinvention of the Italian polychoral style. They sound well in the acoustics of St Augustine's, Kilburn, with much sensitive one-to-a-part

Much sensitive one-to-a-part singing contrasts with the energy and sheer oomph of the tutti

contrasting with the energy and sheer oomph of the tutti. Skinner arranges vocal forces and instrumental support with ■ deft touch. Having said that, the jewel on this double CD is an alternatim Mass setting with chant interleaving polyphony played on the organ of Roskilde Cathedral by Stephen Farr, employing toe-curlingly tasty registrations. This is simply marvellous and the change in ambience and sound is engineered well, drawing the listener in to delightfully devotional moments among all that multi-vocal glory.

Dial the scale down for the miniature consorts of **John Amner – Complete Consort Music** [Rubicon RCD 1032] from the Dublin Consort Singers and Fretwork, directed by Mark Keane.

These seven fine singers all shine as individuals and together offer delicate filigrees of sound, a charming sense of ensemble, essential nimbleness and a vocal character and individualism beautifully balanced with blend and sensitivity. This fugitive music is best captured in gestures of grace and intensity: each is a little world, the shortest at c.1 minute, into which performers must invite you with assurance. There's some occasional dodgy intonation when they work too hard but there's no doubting their commitment and emotional engagement. The clarity and presence of the recording are noteworthy and the programme structure, saving the meatier verse anthems for the end, well-constructed.

This ensemble is off to ■ great start; let's look forward to hearing more from them as they grow in assurance and stature.

When you think of Venice there are a few names which come to the fore before one gets to this one, but just listen to **Alessandro Grandi – Celesti Fiori – Motetti** [Arcana A 464] from Accademia d'Arcadia with the UtFaSol Ensemble and Alessandra Rossi Lürig, and you might want to think again. 'A Venetian Genius'? Indubitably, but overshadowed unfairly by Monteverdi? Not so much, though it is fabulous stuff and the nine singers, theorbo, organ, cornetti (some very fine virtuosi) and sackbuts in various delicious combinations on this disc are compelling. Some motets offer gripping, edge-of-the-seat stuff, expression and elegance, charming *abbellimenti*, and emotional depth that would draw tears from ■ marble statue. Ironically, it was recorded in the lively acoustics that inspired Monteverdi – Basilica di Santa Barbara, Mantua – although Grandi never worked there but in Venice, Ferrara, and Bergamo.

So, these three composers have their moment in the sun, but let's note another with a delightful performance on YouTube, recorded live in Ferrara's Pinacoteca Nazionale del Palazzo dei Diamanti, of the opening of **La Liberazione di Ruggiero dall'isola di Alcina**, an opera from one of their contemporaries, Francesca Caccini, who went largely unrecognised until recently, simply by virtue of being female. If you like what you hear, there are recordings of the entire work available.

Rebecca Tavener is a singer and director specialising in early and contemporary music. She is founder-director of Canty, Scotland's only professional medieval music group.

▼ 'Multi-vocal glory': Alamire and director David Skinner



◀ A Choral Celebration

Helen Pagsley, Lindsay Gray, Tabitha Rodway, Susan Welch (s), Alice Barrows (a), Paul Rothwell, Peter Wagstaff (t), David Butler (bar), Stephen Hamnett (b), Caritas Consort, Emma Gibbins (org) / Lindsay Gray (dir)
Priory PRCD 1219 [68:32]

★★★



In the LP era, this would have clocked in at around 40

minutes, tops, unless someone stumped up for a 'double album'. The only problem with Caritas's generous offering, as well sung as they ever have, is precisely its generosity. In a trawl of mostly short pieces, from Byrd and Tallis to Peter Warlock and William Lloyd Weber, Bruckner's *Locus iste* comes in at a weighty 11 minutes and seems to signal the end of something rather than kicking off the long tramp of the second half. A record to be sampled in parts, perhaps, rather than entire. Oliver Twist asking for less might sound a bit man-bites-dog, but sometimes less really is more.

BRIAN MORTON

Annabel Rooney: As a seed bursts forth

Choir of Christ's College, Cambridge, Gabriel Harley, Edward Lilley (org) / David Rowland (dir)
Regent REGCD 525 [64:05]

★★★★



Annabel Rooney's music always has great tonal and textural warmth, and a feeling that every piece comes out of a distinct musical idea, rather than simply accompaniment to a text. An Evening Service in Latin is

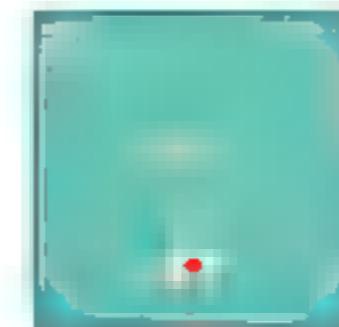
subtitled 'Fourths' because it is largely based on quartal harmony. Another is couched in D major, with a main theme that again relies on fourths. And yet, the *Magnificat* is anything but twilit or crepuscular as that tonality can sometimes be. Instead, it emphasises the stoical practicality of the handmaiden, before the more retiring lyricism of the *Nunc dimittis*. These are two of the four pieces with organ accompaniment, including Rooney's first use of the instrument on *To her son*, which has the same tender-toughness. The Christ's choir sing with rare ease, as confident in their composer as they are in their home setting.

BRIAN MORTON

Japan (Hosokawa, Takemitsu, Mamiya, Kondō)

Dorothea Winkel, Wakako Nakaso (s), Stefanie Gläser-Blumenschein, Wiebke Wighardt (a), Alexander Yudenkov (t), Bernhard Hartmann (b), SWR Vokal Ensemble, Franz Bach (perc) / Marcus Creed (dir)
SWR Classic SWR 19079 [67:59]

★★★★



It's often forgotten that the post-war attempt to blend native Japanese forms with new developments in occidental music was often done through choral experiment. And yet none of these composers, with the partial exception of Michio Mamiya, is best known as a vocal composer. Tōru Takemitsu told me that one of his early musical memories was listening to German choirs, so it's doubly fitting, given his subsequent career in the west,

that it should be a German ensemble that brings his *Wind Horse*, *Sakura (Cherry Blossom)*, *Wings* and *Small Sky* to such convincing life. Even fans of Takemitsu might be surprised to find so much choral music on a disc. Toshio Hosokawa's *Lotus Blossom*, with its delicate percussion part, is an excellent opener, confounding any misleadingly 'Orientalist' expectations. Mamiya's *Composition for Chorus no. 1* is more deeply feeling than its bland title suggests and is sung with controlled energy. The gem of the collection, though, is Jō Kondō's *Motet Under The Rose*. It should be the set text for anyone studying Japan's peacetime encounter with the west.

BRIAN MORTON



■ Rinck 'inventiveness and taste'

The four movements of Charles Callahan's **Melodic Suite** (Trumpet Voluntary, Chaconne, Invocation, Exultation) have a strong grasp on their grateful and resolutely tonal harmonic idiom, and make only modest technical demands (although a little recasting may be needed when the pedal line reaches top G). As the title of the work promises, they display a sure sense of melodic contour, and the individual movements – indeed, the suite as a whole – will be useful as recital and liturgical items to many players. The whole piece can be managed with two manuals and pedals, with a bit of ingenuity. Michael Burkhardt's **Variations on Noël nouvelet** – useful at Easter or Christmas – are similarly practical in conception, although conceived and more specifically registered for a three-manual instrument. Textures and styles are judiciously varied, and the work closes with a nod to Daquin in an ostinato-based rondo which builds considerable rhythmic momentum. The piece is slightly trickier than the Callahan, but by no means prohibitively so, and is a useful addition to the seasonal repertoire.

Roderick Elms's **A Christmas Carillon** is an entertaining romp ▶

ORGAN MUSIC

Charles Callahan: **Melodic Suite**

Morning Star MSM-10-05
US\$16.00

Michael Burkhardt: **Theme and Variations on Noël nouvelet**

Morning Star MSM-10-181
US\$14.00

Roderick Elms: **A Christmas Carillon**

Camden Music CM 296 £12.95

Rachel Laurin: **Douze courtes pièces pour orgue, op.75 vol.5**

Wayne Leupold Editions
WL 600311 US\$49.00

Johann Christian Rinck: **18 leichte Orgelstücke op.106; Andante mit acht Variationen op.70**

Edition Dohr 14203 £9.95;
Edition Dohr 18942 £14.50

CHORAL SELECTION



Works for concert and church by William Averitt, Gabriel Jackson, Christopher Gunning, Russell Hepplewhite and Connor J. Koppin

Concert planners who are thinking of doing Rossini's *Petite Messe*, Brahms's *Liebeslieder Walzer* or the four-hands piano accompaniment version of Brahms's *Requiem* have two keyboard players at their disposal for other items in the programme. What to choose from a relatively short list? I have just come across William Averitt's **Where Dreams Fly** – published a couple of years ago – a suite of pieces to words by Robert Bede (SATB & piano (4-hands); Schirmer 0031348656, US\$10.50). The poet has re-imagined in words seven paintings by Chagall. The quirky nature of paintings and text is complemented by Averitt's imaginative settings. There is a nice variety of voicing, tempo and mood; and while the choral harmonies will need more than a bit of practice, the overall effect is well worth the effort. The whole suite takes about 20 minutes to perform.

▼ Gabriel Jackson: his *O Virgo Virginum* is '3.5 minutes of pure pleasure'



If in a forthcoming concert you've got a really good tenor soloist (however you acquired him), give him a little bit more to do. Gabriel Jackson's setting of the great Marian antiphon **O Virgo Virginum** is 3.5 minutes of pure pleasure (T sol, SSATB unacc.; Oxford University Press 9780193523760, £2.15). Ecstatic solo phrases unfurl across long-held choral chords at the outset; the five-part chorus comes more into its own thereafter, and over an aleatory ATB passage sopranos/trebles take over on rapture-watch. Finally, the choir offer a serene choral section, and a lovely simple, enharmonic change allows the music to finish as it started.

Christopher Gunning, who wrote the wonderful *Poirot* theme for ITV, has set a modernised medieval lyric **Come, Let Us Gather**, for the St Albans Choral Society (SATB & org.; Cadenza Music CAZCGCLG 01, £2.25). In one sense there is nothing new here. The musical language uses the 'modern – quasi medieval' harmonies passed on by Walton and Richard Rodney Bennett, and the form is a chorus and verse rondo. The 7/8 time signature might trip a

Ecstatic solo phrases unfurl across long-held choral chords ... sopranos take over on rapture-watch

few up for a while, but truly, the work poses no great challenges. The question is: is all this successfully done? And the answer is certainly 'yes'. The text references both Christmas and Easter, so performances for either festival would be entirely appropriate.

I am drawn to the lilting charm of Russell Hepplewhite's **How Lovely Are Thy Dwellings Fair**, another piece based on two different musical ideas (SATB unacc.; Banks Music GCL 038, £1.95). Unusually, the structure involves two tonalities: E flat major for the bobbing 'How Lovely' music and G major for the rest. The difference between these two tonal centres is reinforced by variations in tempo. In its unassuming way, the music is just right for the words. Chord-spotters will have no trouble identifying the one used more than once by Morten Lauridsen.

There is much to admire about **Where Everything is Music** by Connor J. Koppin (SATB & piano; Oxford University Press 9780193529007, £2.95). The remarkable text, a translation of verses by the 13th-century Sufi poet Rumi, generates music with an in-your-face vigour, punctuated by moments of smiling serenity. But for this writer the momentum of the piece is undermined by too many stops-and-starts, and an unnecessarily fussy rhythm for the choir at the end.

After an early career as a freelance choral director and counter-tenor, Jeremy Jackman was a member of the King's Singers for ten years. In 1990 he resumed a career in conducting and leading workshops. He is currently musical director of the English Baroque Choir, and the Cecilian Singers in Leicester. www.jeremyjackman.co.uk

◀ through *In Dulci Jubilo*, which really needs a large instrument to have its full effect – a solo reed is called for at several junctures. Continually changing metres, textural variety, and a fluent harmonic sense keep interest alive in a work which needs a player of some technical assurance – any sense of scramble or stress and the effect will be lost. Once or twice there are ghostly and distant echoes of Demessieux's *Répons pour le temps de Pâques*, a work of comparable difficulty.

Rachel Laurin's collection, **Douze courtes pièces pour orgue**, consists of 12 works written to commission, and an extensive preface by the composer provides full details of the circumstances surrounding each new piece. There are four works here, each one consisting of three movements, and they encompass genres from chorale variation to free tone poem. Included in the impressive range of genres explored are neat homages to Gibbons and Vierne, a tricky 'boomerang' fugue for manuals only, a jazzy fugal scherzo, and expressive cantilenas, all showing a sure stylistic touch and a strong sense of idiomatic organ writing. A varied and rewarding collection, which often needs considerable reserves of technique and agility from the performer.

Two new editions of Rinck offer some rewarding and probably unfamiliar works from an often unjustly neglected period in German organ literature. The **18 leichte Orgelstücke** of op.106 are generally modest in dimension, although not quite exclusively so, and show an unerring sense of the specific function ('for use in public worship') stated in the title of the collection. Their

natural home is really in the liturgy; but the **Andante mit acht Variationen** op.70 is a more developed concert work, putting a charming but far from anodyne 16-bar theme through a range of treatments including changes of metre and tonality. The whole thing is done with inventiveness, taste, and no little compositional assurance, and would make an attractive recital item on any instrument of two manuals and pedals and modest tonal resources. Try it instead of a Mendelssohn Sonata, perhaps.

STEPHEN FARR

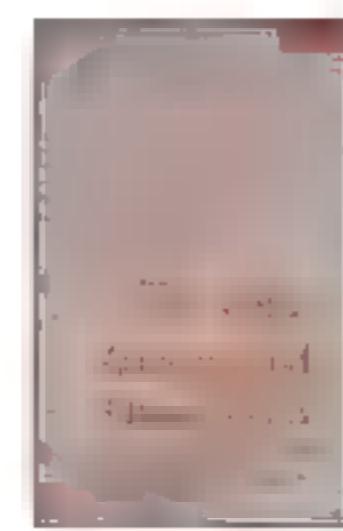
CHORAL MUSIC

John Rutter: Anthems and Choral Songs for upper-voice choirs

SA and /or boys' unchanged voices & piano

Oxford University Press

ISBN 978193530232 £8.25



This recently published anthology scored for upper voices features nine of John Rutter's most

beautiful iconic works both sacred and secular. Also, along with some of the most widely performed pieces including 'All things bright and beautiful', 'A Clare Benediction', 'For the beauty of the earth', 'A Gaelic blessing', 'God be in my head', 'The Lord bless you and keep you', there are some other perhaps lesser-known compositions, for example 'A flower remembered', written in memory of the victims of the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami in March 2011.

A bonus of purchasing an anthology as a conductor, beyond the obvious economics, is that other repertoire



■ John Rutter: his evocative texts are highly suitable for young singers

possibilities might emerge. Furthermore, when working in an educational context, purchasing an anthology for young singers who might also be aspiring composers can trigger curiosity regarding choral literature beyond one piece at a time. Give out a new anthology to a young choir and watch the response!

Interesting to ponder and acknowledge is the fact that John Rutter often writes his own texts, and 'A flower remembered' is a fine example of his extraordinary ability. His text in this piece includes the lines: 'A flower remembered can never wither: For ever blooming

as bright as day, Its fragrance lingering like music softly playing' and 'The birds still fly in other valleys; The snows have turned to flowing streams.' Selecting suitable texts for young singers is an important, often challenging, part of the process when choosing repertoire. Rutter's evocative texts in several of the featured works are highly suitable for young singers due to their timeless meaning and often contemporary echoes.

Similarly, 'Look at the world', written in celebration of the 70th anniversary of the Council for the Protection of Rural England, features texts that clearly have relevance for young ▶

◀ people, in this case the need to care for the world today, which are coloured by Rutter's ever optimistic perspective on life: 'We are his hands, stewards of all his bounty' and 'So many joys and wonders, so many miracles along our way.' A refreshing a cappella section, albeit brief, features near the end of the piece, which could be a great opportunity for less experienced choirs who may not always consider singing unaccompanied.

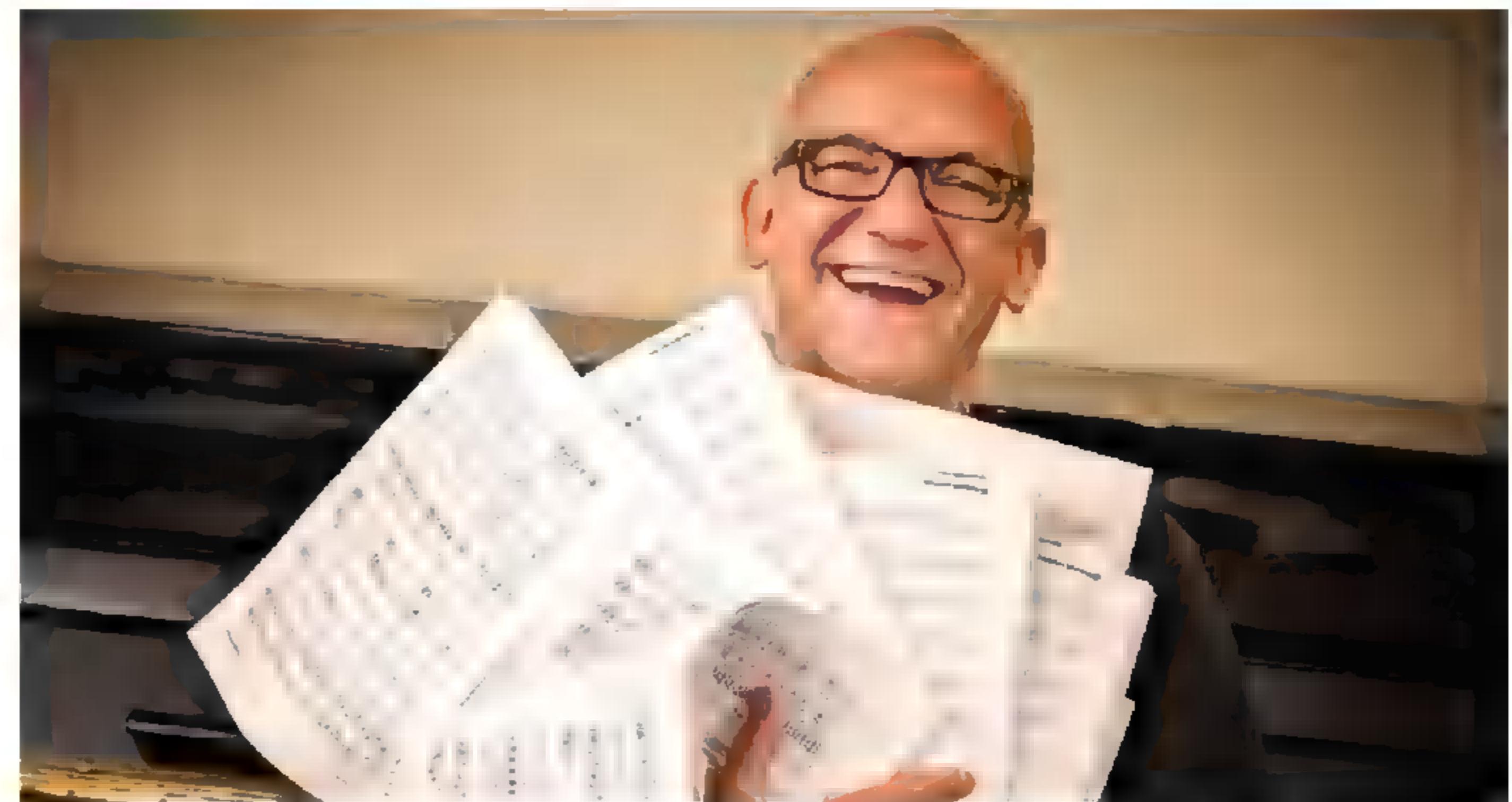
Again, with text by Rutter, 'The music's always there with you' could be a fine piece for programming on various occasions with its references to the transformative power of music: 'And it feels like you never have to say good-bye, 'cos the music's always there.' The whole anthology is, not surprisingly, expertly and beautifully set for the young developing voice, with lush accompaniments supporting the part writing in a life-enhancing way.

Although categorised as 'Easy' by OUP – and I acknowledge that the pieces are indeed totally accessible for choirs with little singing experience – this glorious melodic music will be relished by all choirs. The anthology represents a fantastic resource to support building programmes for upper voices which will surely shine out as a constant good in music-making for developing choirs.

JOY HILL

Bob Chilcott: *Christmas Oratorio*

M-S,T,B sols, SATB chorus, org. & fl. or small ensemble
Oxford University Press BC 227,
ISBN 9780193514379, vocal score £11.95



JOHN BELLAWS

■ Bob Chilcott, who has excelled himself in his *Christmas Oratorio*



Bob Chilcott's *Christmas Oratorio* has 17 movements and comes in at just under an hour.

How does it most obviously differ from the other *Christmas Oratorio*? Bach's is a series of six cantatas celebrating specific days of the church year from Christmas Day to Epiphany, whereas Chilcott's tells a story that stretches from the Annunciation (25 March) until Candlemas (2 February), via Christmas. Crucially, these two seasonal limits allow Chilcott to include a Magnificat and a Nunc dimittis respectively. The Magnificat is for mezzo-soprano, choir, and organ; the soloist sings her text in English, while the choir interjects the entire 8th tone plainchant Magnificat in Latin. The Nunc dimittis is in English and the bass soloist (baritone, really) is accompanied by choir and organ in lilting triple time.

Both Bach and Chilcott use a tenor Evangelist, who advances the Biblical narrative; in Chilcott's case the Evangelist is accompanied by harp in

the ensemble version – a nice modern twist on continuo practice. Both composers include hymns within that narrative (in both cases the hymns account for about a quarter of the material). Bach's chorales are an integral part of his *Christmas Oratorio*; Bach used pre-existent Lutheran hymns, which were designed to be sung by the choir and not the congregation. Chilcott, on the other hand, uses pre-existent, well-known words for his five hymns, four of which are designed for audience participation, and all of which have been newly composed. At this year's Three Choirs Festival the audience had time to learn two of the hymns in the interval before the work's premiere performance in Gloucester Cathedral. A prior all-comers practice is indeed desirable, but in all four hymns, audience members are only required to join in for the final verse, by which time they should have had time to catch on. Anyway, this is Bob Chilcott's music, so it is nothing if not thoroughly approachable and properly

designed for the job. And the only way to learn a new hymn is to get stuck in.

In addition to the five soloists, there are a further three step-out roles: Angel (soprano); Gabriel (tenor); and Herod (bass). The chorus writing exudes craft and there's not a note out of place. There are challenges within the choral writing, but all of them are surmountable for amateur forces with careful rehearsal and coaxing. Crucially this music is good to sing and memorable with it. Most charmingly, the narrative is propelled on its way by a kaleidoscopic variety of textures. Clearly this work meant a lot to Chilcott as he was writing it and the result is a palpable love-affair between the composer, his forces, and the texts. It is brave – very brave – to compose a *Christmas Oratorio* (and indeed to give it that title), but Bob Chilcott has excelled himself here. I would advise trying to scrape together funds in order to pay for a good instrumental ensemble, but the flute and organ version will suffice if you really can't.

JEREMY SUMMERLY



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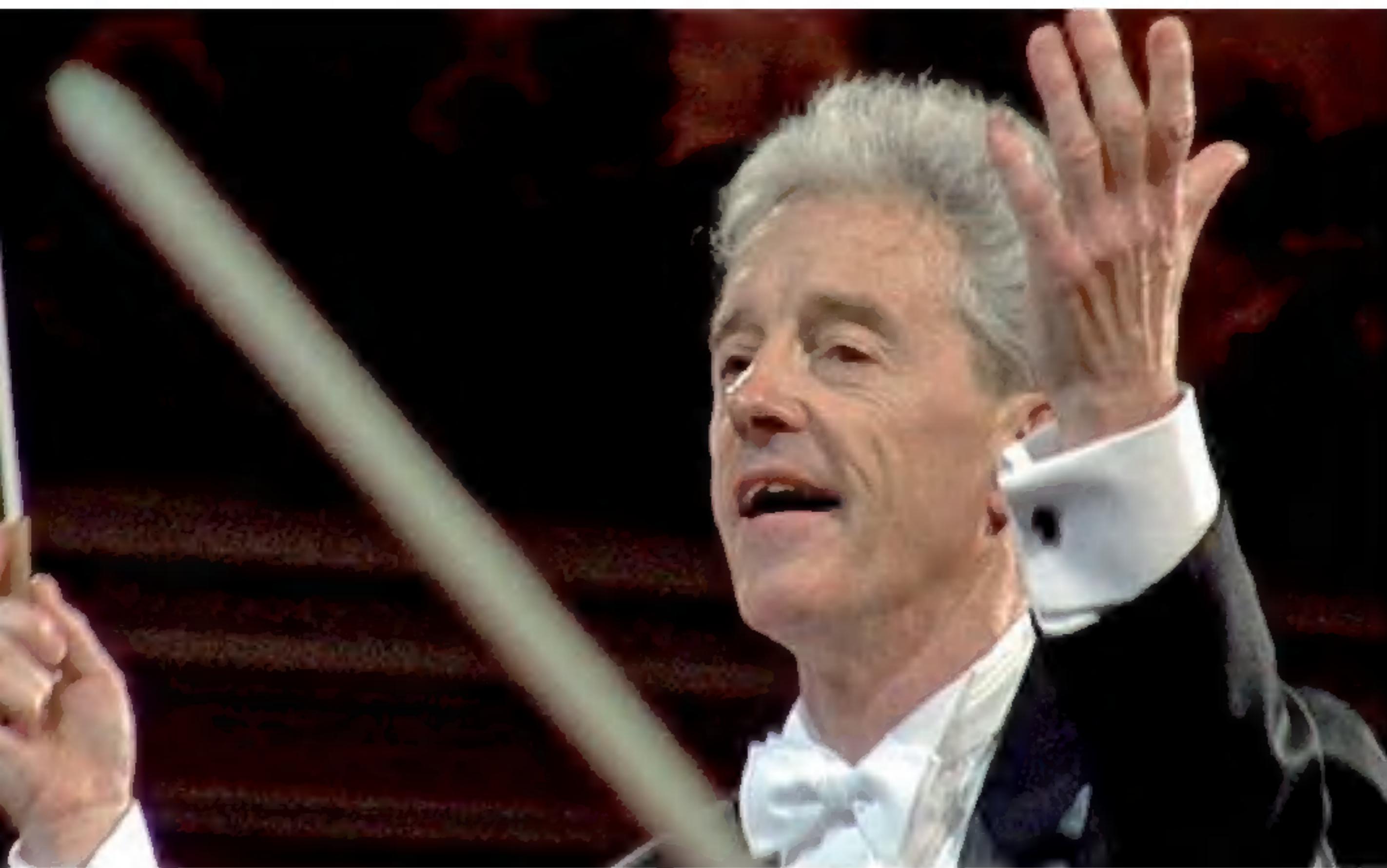


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ENCOUNTERS

JOHN PRYCE-JONES, CHORUS MASTER AND CHORAL CONDUCTOR



COURTESY JOHN PRYCE-JONES

Until I joined the Welsh National Opera Company as chorus master in 1968, I had worked a lot with non-trained singers. But then from 1968 to 1986, it was only with professional opera singers. Coming back to amateur singers in 1988 [as chief conductor of the Halifax Choral Society] was quite a shock, but I began to realise that it was equally fulfilling to work with relatively or completely untrained singers, who had fewer or no preconceptions of singing technique.

I am passionate about voices and singing technique – the latter is a controversial art but thanks to a wonderful teacher and friend, Gerald Wragg, I have had great success helping and improving singers both trained and untrained of almost all ages. This has made my long association with the choral society hugely rewarding.

People say, gosh you're lucky to have a job like that. Yes you are, if you have the flair and talent, but that's true of all jobs. The best thing about it is standing up and giving the performance, hopefully getting it right. However, there's a lot of preparation and much of it means that you are dealing with a lot of people who are emotionally exposed, and therefore liable to take offence – or not, as the case may be!

Thinking back to my days as founder chorus master with Opera North, we auditioned hundreds of singers and my colleagues auditioned even more hundreds of instrumentalists for the orchestra. It was a great privilege, because in their lifetime few people are involved with the formation of a major opera company. The amazing thing was that already when we started we had more "friends" than some other opera companies had after years. There was huge enthusiasm for this in Leeds – so many people in the area wanted the company to come and succeed; after the first night, the press called it "a near miracle". Working for so many years with operatic voices, we all know they have to sing loudly on stage and they tend to have a rather wide vibrato; at the time, it didn't worry me particularly, but the more I worked with untrained voices the less I liked it – some years after starting with the Halifax chorus I went back to do some opera and thought, gosh, which of those three notes are they meaning to sing? The amateur experience had caused me to embrace a more pure singing style, which of course has its roots in bel canto.

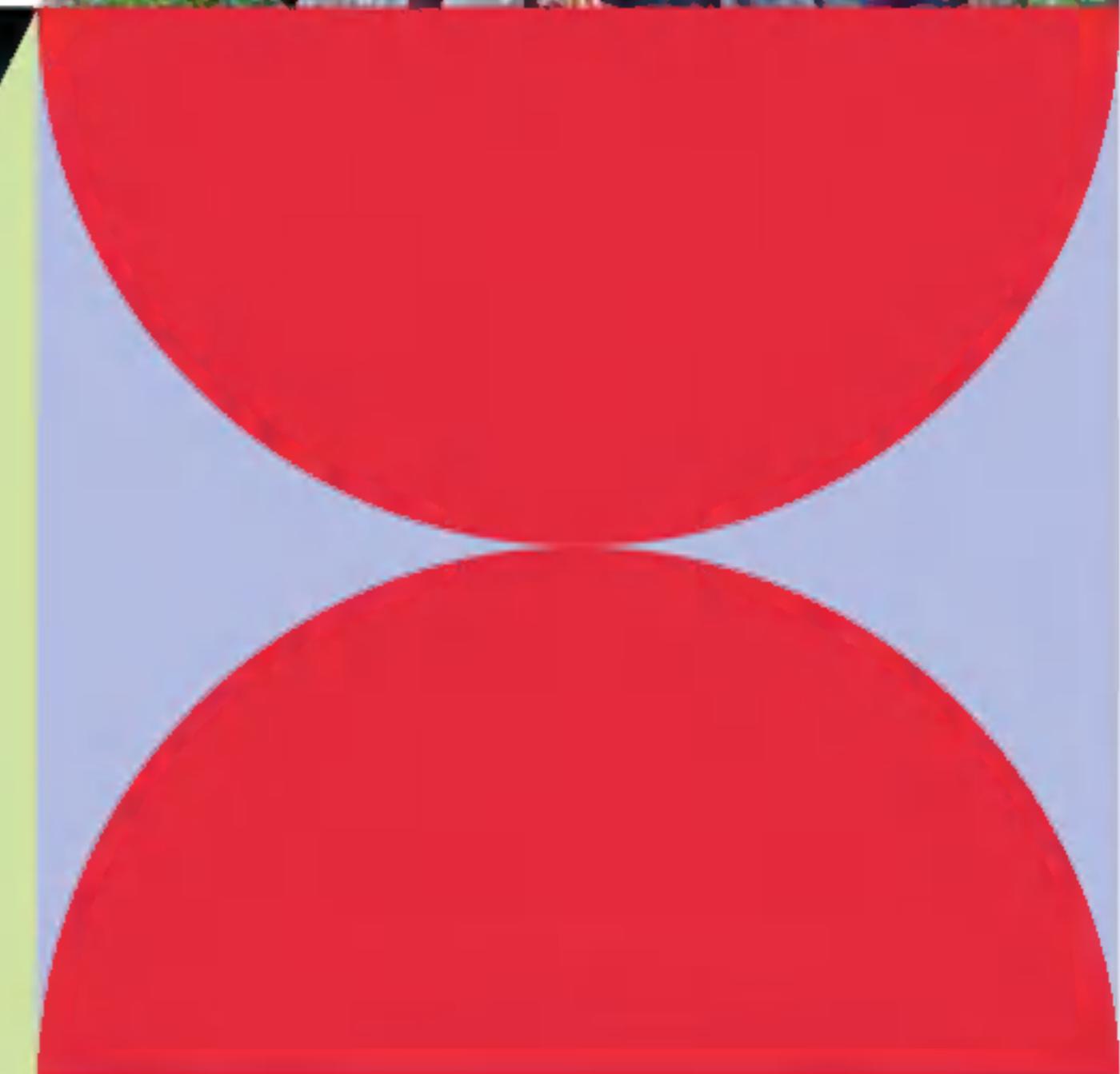
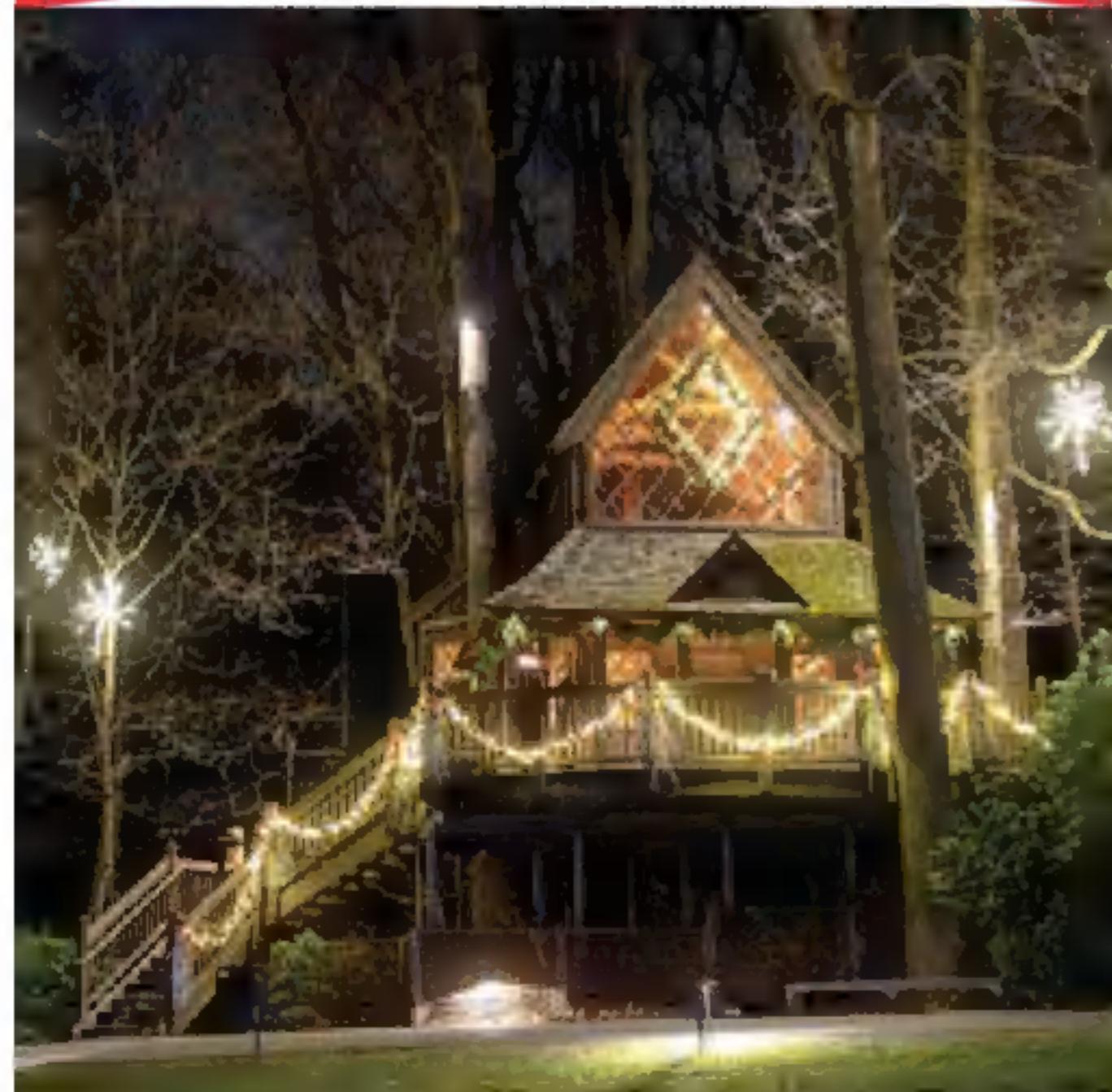
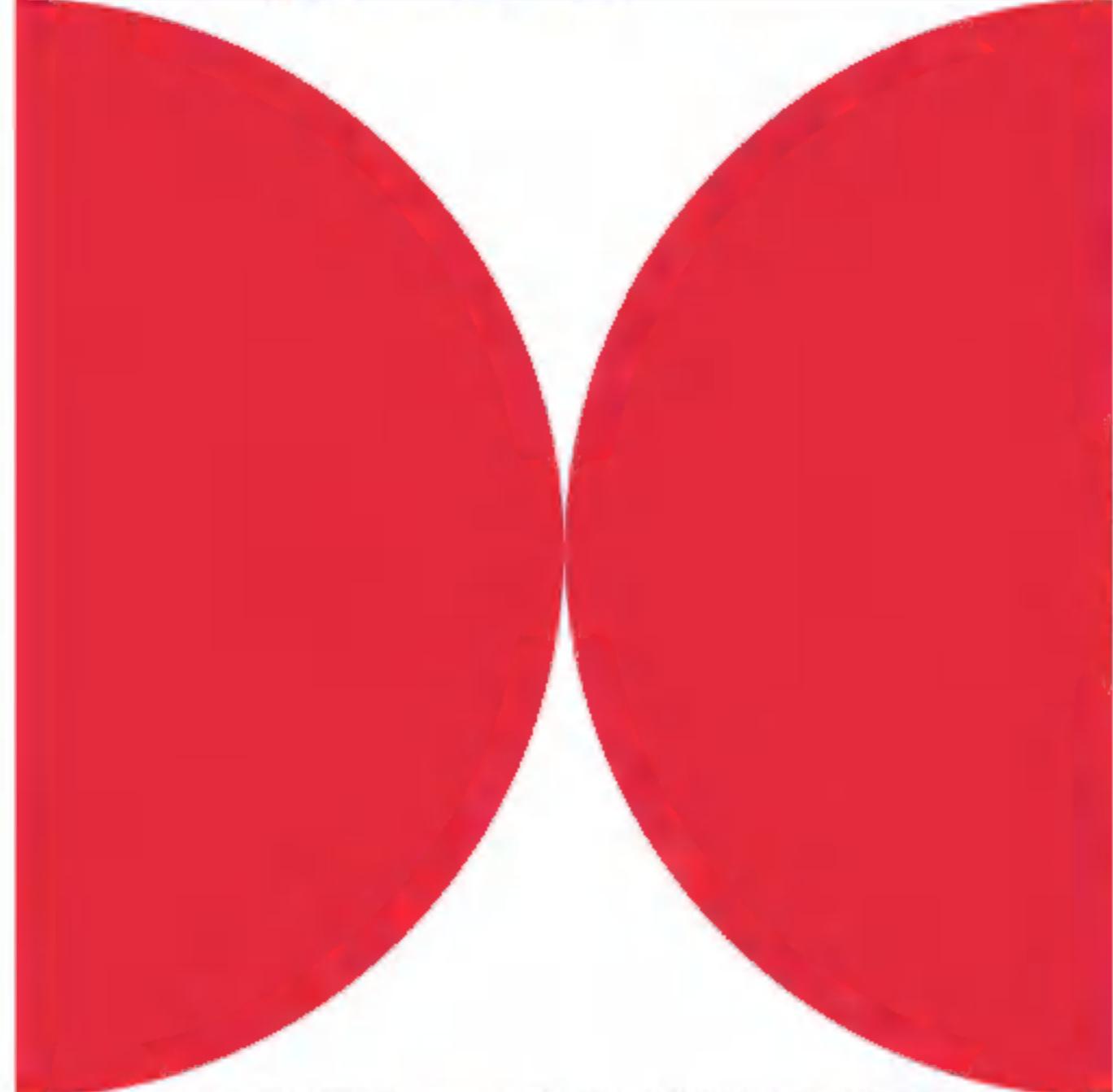
Obviously there's a gear-shift involved when switching from Bruckner, say, to Verdi. I was explaining to the chorus the other

night that if you take Bruckner's *Te Deum*, the music is the perfect expression of a very religious man. Verdi, on the other hand, professed to be an atheist and was criticised for writing his *Requiem* in such an operatic style. When performing these composers, I said, you're thinking about the text and the feel of the national personality.

For example, if you go into a café in Italy and see a couple having a discussion, it looks like they're having a flaming row which might end in fisticuffs – but they might only be discussing the price of eggs or, more likely, politics. Transferring that sense of drama into the music, Verdi, in the *Requiem*, starts *pppp* and at the climactic moments he asks for *ffff*; in fact, he knows the chorus can't sing as quietly as *pppp* but he knows that's the way to get it as soft as he wants. And, underneath, there's this quivering pulse. Is this the Italian character? Yes, it's always sort of boiling up – it's a totally emotional setting and everyone in the choir and orchestra should feel that sensation in order to convey the excitement completely.

A large part of my work, and my wife's work, has been outreach to youngsters, necessarily so because of the parlous state of music education and the fact that school choirs are few and far between. [Pryce-Jones's community work includes Future Heroes (a collaboration with Calderdale Community Foundation), Yorkshire Youth Choir, the Calderdale Primary Schools choir competition, and Singing for Fun.] You have to accept that you will lose them when they move away for work or further education, but we did a youth concert back in July for which 50 alumni came back, from all over the country. I received letters and had conversations, many of which claimed, "you changed my life". But that's also the sort of thing the 18-year-olds are saying to me: "You made me realise what I could do and how I could express myself" Well, it's the power of music doing that, but even if it's only one person saying it, it's made it all worthwhile. ■

*John Pryce-Jones gave his last concert with Halifax Choral Society – Verdi's *Requiem* – on 13 October. He was talking to Graeme Kay.*



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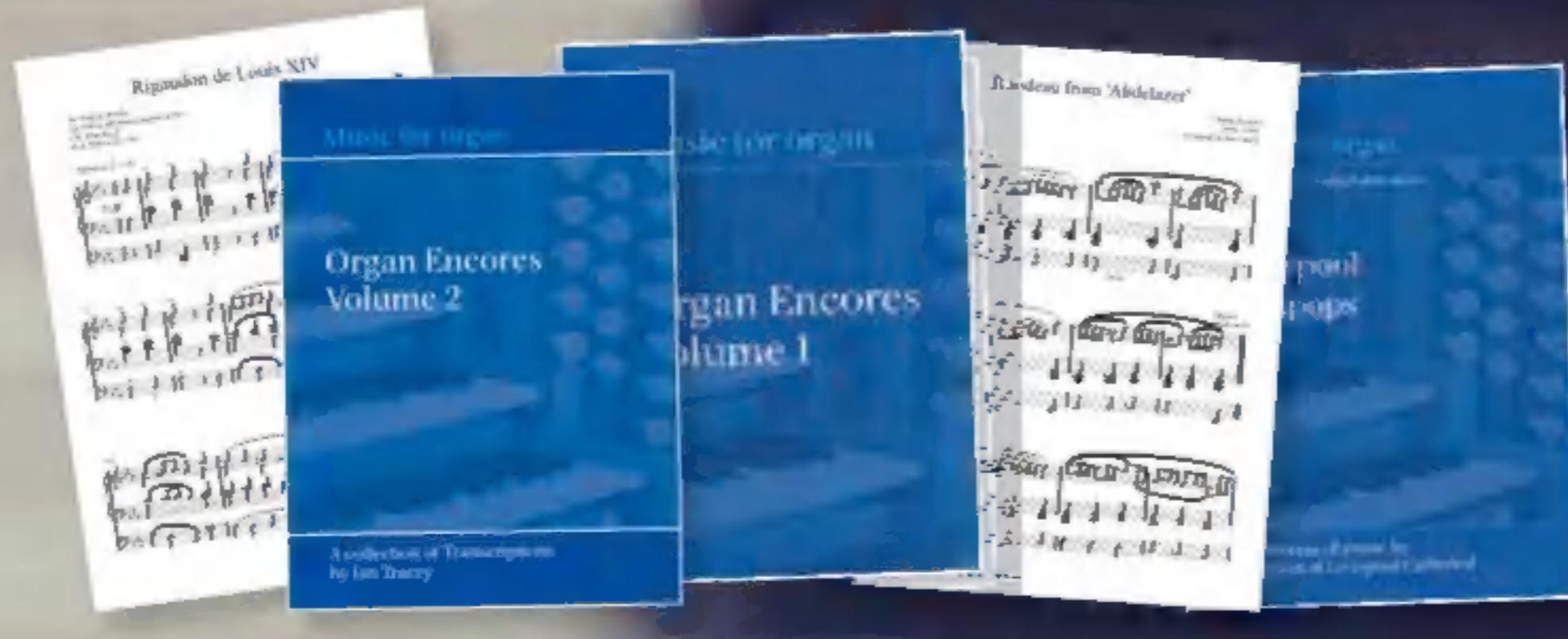
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